Source Use in the Homiletics of Cincinnati Rabbinic Students of the Hebrew Union College, 1994-2015

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Abstract

During the fourth and fifth years of study at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion Cincinnati campus, student rabbis are expected to deliver senior sermons to the College community, one a text-based sermon, another unbound by the *parashat hashavuah.* In an attempt to understand the ways that student rabbis make use of their education and the literary tools at their disposal, this thesis undertook to examine the frequency of textual references, and the way preachers articulated their message around historical voices.

Ranging from 1994 to 2015, the 492 sermons encompassed in the field of research yielded 900 unique references, and 2,738 total citations, coming to an average of 5.57 sources per sermon. Student rabbis made most frequent use of Biblical commentators, including Rashi, Rambam, and Ramban, as well as frequent references to Psalms and Proverbs. In using these voices from Jewish tradition, each student rabbi demonstrated not only their own perspective on Judaism, but also the way that their education had supported their endeavor. Which classes, for example, were the most compelling for the rabbinic field, and which areas of study and interest were most relatable with which a congregation could interact.

From explorations of personal identity to in-depth textual analysis, each of the 492 sermons offer insight into the work of a rabbi-in-formation in discovering the unique voice with which they will preach over their career. The popular aphorism claims that a rabbi gives a single sermon over the entirety of

their career, and that every unique sermon is another branch of the same tree. If

that is the case, then these sermons are the very foundations from which an

entire generation of the rabbinate grew. And along that growth, this thesis

reflects the teachers and guides that helped to establish that message, and ground

it in Jewish tradition.

Introduction

The art of homiletics is an act of synthesizing the world with Jewish texts and ideals. With the birth of the Reform Movement in Germany in the 19th century, rabbis and scholars have attempted to convey a message that the listening public would find both traditional and relatable. Gone were the days of long discourses on halakhic arguments. Instead, congregants came to hear an explanation of what Judaism had to say about the world in which the people were living. In an effort to offer words that were both relatable and educational, the modern iteration of the sermon was born.[1]

These were not, though, simply discussions of popular culture and current events. The very basis upon which the rabbi ascended the pulpit was in order to bring understanding and clarity to the textual tradition that is a hallmark of Jewish history. It wasn't enough to simply read the text and offer an opinion. The task of the preacher had evolved into the process of contextualizing the scripture and putting forward a message that was relatable to the lives of the Jews living their own experience of their identity.

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[1] In his work *Response to Modernity*, Dr. Michael A. Meyer notes the many places where Reform Judaism allowed for the influence of Protestantism to impact the product of how Jews were engaging with their own religion. He describes, "Protestantism placed the sermon at the center of the service; it focused on words spoken and sung, not physical ritual acts; and as a religion which had itself revolted and developed further, it raised the hope that, in its liberal formations, it would go far toward meeting Judaism on common religious ground." (pg. 143) Meyer is affirming the assertion here that, based on the influence of the Protestant Church on Reform approaches to worship and prayer, the very notion of preaching in Jewish spaces adapted, resulting in what we know today as the sermon.

The sermon as an area of study offers a particular insight into the development of Jewish scholarship and practice, in that it is the opportunity for a preacher to offer a perspective on their own area of focus and significance. On any given day, a homilist has the freedom to choose to speak on any number of topics. From a discussion of the parashat hashavuah to an exploration of a timely issue of national or global significance and everything in between, the topic of a sermon gives insight into the priorities and interests of the preacher, and thus gives subsequent listeners and readers the chance to understand their own relationship to the topic and their own priorities.

One such moment stood out as the inspiration for the personal significance of the sermon as an act of contextualization and meaning making. In the wake of an anti-Semitic incident in the city in which I was living, I attended services the following Friday night in order to try to come to terms with the way the community, and, most specifically, the rabbi would handle the direct challenge that our tradition had experienced in the preceding week. It was impossible to ignore the increase in attendance; an entire congregation had come to services in order to hear how the rabbi was going to process and guide through this moment of darkness. It was, then, to my deep chagrin that the rabbi omitted the conversation altogether. Instead of a discussion of anti-Semitism, of the pain and confusion the community had just experienced, we heard a mundane exploration of the weekly Torah portion, and a call to action so bland that its impact barely reached to the subsequent oneg Shabbat.

As a recipient of such a sermon, I couldn't help but feel deep frustration at the missed opportunity. This was a chance for the preacher to engage a room full

of people, a chance to give healing and strength to a city that was obviously in considerable pain. There were, of course, any number of considerations to which the rabbi was beholden. It was possible that the congregation was working within a larger city-wide policy statement, and that the community rabbis had been instructed not to discuss the incident outside of the purview of their joint position. It was possible that the rabbinic team at the congregation was concerned about over-engaging with the incident, one which had dominated the Jewish community's attention for days on end. It was entirely possible that the rabbi had done everything right in the way they had handled the situation; and yet, it was impossible to ignore the feeling of having been cheated out of an opportunity. This was a time for a rabbi to provide comfort and support with their preaching, and instead chose not to. While there are some who would argue that a rabbi's job is to provide Torah to the community, it is worth acknowledging that attendance at services that particular week was higher than usual; people had arrived to hear what their rabbi had to say. Whether it was within the confines of the role of preacher or not, an opportunity was presented, and subsequently missed.

Now, it is important also to acknowledge the sheer mass of opportunities a rabbi has to offer words to their congregation. In most situations, it would be next to impossible to learn all that much about a community or its leader by way of any single drashah. A rabbi has to be considerate of the frequency of certain messages, the emotional tenor of the congregation as a whole, the ability of the listeners to actually engage with a particular topic at a particular time. The analysis of the impact of the art of preaching is an undertaking akin to a long-

term sociological experiment. Yet, one laboratory of homiletic development stands out as noteworthy: the rabbinical school.

Nowhere was the development of the relationship between text tradition and modernity more evident than in rabbinical seminary. Students of the rabbinate were tasked with a double obligation: they were expected not only to learn the sacred texts and the history of the Jewish people, but also to begin the process of considering their impact upon the development of Judaism in the years to come. The values of textual synthesis and contextualization were ever-more significant in the classroom because it was a harbinger for what was to come, what the rabbinate would offer from the pulpit for the next generation.

On the Cincinnati campus of Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, it has been the minhag hamakom for fourth and fifth year students to offer a "senior sermon," a culmination of their learning to that point. These sermons, which evolved from weekday t'filot to Saturday morning Shabbat worship[2], were the central jewel of the most significant moment for a student to lead their community in prayer and learning, and to begin to make the transition from a student practicing their skills to a rabbi, offering their talents in earnest. These sermons also offered another intriguing quality: they were each one of only

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[2] In recent years, the number of fourth and fifth year students has allowed a Shabbat service opportunity for each member of both classes. In past years, with larger attendance numbers, certain weeks would receive more than one preacher discussing different aspects of the same portion. In 1998, for example, there were 45 students in the two years, far too many to accommodate everyone with their own weekend worship experience. The students in these larger years gave sermons on Mondays and Thursdays, accompanying the Torah cycle's weekday reading schedule. This is more than double the attendance of each of the years from 2010 to 2014.

two opportunities for a student to have a virtually uncensored[3] time to speak to

their classmates and teachers, their colleagues and community members, of an

issue of significance to that individual. In this setting, it was profoundly less likely

that a student rabbi would feel obligated to stay away from a particular topic or to

choose an overly simplistic message. This was, in essence, the single chance for a

student rabbi to set the priority for the congregation, and to get to practice the

use of their rabbinic voice to make a point they considered worth making.

The Klau Library in Cincinnati has preserved several decades of sermons

delivered in the school's Scheuer Chapel, each year's offerings bound and

available for public viewing. These sermons offer subsequent scholars a treasure-

trove of information across a number of potential areas of study, from the grand

evaluation of topics of discourse all the way to tracking the number of students in

particular classes over the history of the school. Yet, most essential to the future

of Jewish tradition and learning is the way that each of these student rabbis use

text to craft a particular modern argument.

Each student rabbi, in offering their fourth and fifth year sermons, uses

text in their own way. Some are seeking to explore gaps in the Torah narrative.

Others come with a particular issue of modern significance and attempt to apply

texts of Torah to that issue, in order to learn what the tradition would have the

reader do. In Chapter 1, I will be discussing the approaches and structural

decisions made by preachers as they construct their conversation between

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[3] There were, of course, opportunities for advisors to provide critiques, suggestions, and
pushback, but student rabbis would have been given the space to preach anyway,
perhaps even despite the challenges of a professor.

Judaism and their perception of the world around them. In each of the sermons evaluated, there is a clear format through which the homilist manipulates both the text and their own interpretation of it, in ways that demonstrate the relationship between their central claim and the evidence they choose to use to underscore it.

In a presentation at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati on November 6th, 2017, Rabbi David Wolpe discussed his thoughts on the mandate of a modern rabbinic preacher. He articulated the need for rabbis to be experts in their own fields, rather than using the pulpit as a space to claim political knowledge that isn't the inherent authority from which a rabbi ascends the bimah. In essence, Wolpe was reminding the same rabbinic students who would be delivering the kinds of sermons which are the topic of study of this thesis that they have a mandate from which they preach. While at one time in history a New York Times subscription was a privilege reserved for the intellectual elite, the current landscape of information allows anyone with a smartphone to access information about the world around them. If any Jew can reach into their pocket to learn about the political situation or sociological trends, the obligation or even the opportunity of the rabbi to merely offer their own opinions of the conversations of the day has certainly shifted. Rather, the font of authority from which the preacher taps is their deep knowledge and personal relationship with Jewish textual tradition. It is through their ability to provide Jewish context and perspective that a rabbi brings value and insight. When a leader loses sight of this mandate, they not only drift away from their basis of information, but also run

the risk of alienating their congregation with words that don't have the authority to back up the bully pulpit.

To that end, the rabbinic skill for weaving text into one's conversation on any number of topics is one of the central goals of the senior sermon. Fourth year students are tasked with offering a "text based sermon," while fifth year students have the freedom of a "non-text sermon." This distinction is, at least to some degree, misleading. It is not that the fourth year students are bound to their obligation to deliver words from scripture while fifth year students are allowed to go unchecked by their lack of use of Jewish scholarship. Rather, a fourth year sermon is confined to a conversation on the parashat hashavuah, the weekly Torah portion, whereas fifth year students are offered the freedom to speak on any topic of their choosing. As a matter of fact, it was worth noting that fifth year students generally did not even accept this invitation to speak from any basis of Judaism that they wanted. Almost without exception, every sermon makes at least some mention of the weekly Torah reading. It was, it would seem, a grounding force to be able to use a pre-assigned text as a launch point for the conversation. While some rabbinic students certainly departed quickly from their initial inspiration from the parshah, overwhelmingly students found themselves drawn to using the assigned weekly reading. A further conversation of the kind of influences that went into such decision making will be discussed in Chapter 3.

This thesis will analyze the use of sacred Jewish text in the senior sermons delivered by rabbinic students at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion on the Cincinnati campus. The evaluation of the quantitative textual references is straightforward, and will employ a basic exploration of the

frequency of citations. The qualitative, meanwhile, will be more difficult, in that it requires some kind of standard for evaluating how "well" or "effectively" a point was made. While a preacher certainly can pad their statistics by making frequent reference to any number of sources, it is the way that those voices of the past are put into action that truly determines the success or failure of the message. When a rabbi uses the Torah portion as a launch point before spinning off into a direction of their own choosing totally independent of any further textual underpinnings, it would be fairly easy to see the disconnect between Jewish tradition and the "point" that the rabbi was attempting to articulate. A student who creates a parallel between the textual narrative and modern day example may, perhaps, only use one reference, but the thorough evaluation of that example may demonstrate a far deeper relationship with the text. It would be negligent to ignore the qualitative impact of the way a preacher uses source work to meet their needs. Sometimes this is done through subtlety, while other times the text remains central to the argument. In both cases, Chapter 2 of this work will explore an in-depth analysis of the number of sources used by the rabbinic students in their sermons, while Chapter 3 will analyze the impact of the choices they made, whether those choices demonstrate healthy exegesis or eisegesis on their way to bringing life to their views of the tradition.

At the outset of this exploration, it was my task to determine both the number of years that I would analyze, as well as which years in particular. It was important to me that I did not study any students with whom I was sharing my own time in rabbinical school. At the heart of the homiletic experience is a level of relationship; it is easier to think highly of a poor sermon when you have positive

thoughts about the preacher, and easier to be critical of quality work when you struggle with the individual offering it. Yet, it was important that I look at sermons that maintained a strong relevance in the world in which I was going to be preaching my own rabbinate. At a selfish level, each and every sermon was an opportunity for me to explore the process of honing my own skills for homiletics. I was interested in seeing how student rabbis who had come before me had grapple with similar, if not the same, issues that I would be facing in my own work and my own communities.

As a result, I chose to set the parameters of study to be a 20 year period from 1994 to 2014. This would mean that the last preachers I would study would have been ordained only weeks before I myself went to Jerusalem to start my own rabbinic journey. These would be the colleagues whom I would later go on to meet and potentially some with whom I will work, but in the meantime I maintain an ability to view their work with a certain level of objectivity.[4] A 20 year period was selected in order to maintain enough of a body of work to notice some of the macro-trends that go into the kind of quantitative claims I was hoping to make. Any less than 20 years, and I would have compromised my ability to make any sweeping declarations of the significance of particular source work choices. It is also easy to see that a 20 year period likely would expose my

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[4] It has been particularly interesting, in the months of study preparing for this thesis, to discuss my work with rabbis in the field who are some of the subjects of my study. It has, admittedly, been a helpful networking tool for getting to know some of the characters with whom I have interacted in various work settings. Oddly enough, there are many rabbis who needed to be reminded of the topic about which they spoke oh so many years ago from their days as a student. Many have delivered dozens, even hundreds of sermons since, and the memories of those sermons that, at one time had been so significant, now faded into the background.

research to the cross section of rabbis still occupying the field today, with

approximately an entire rabbinic career encompassed in the 20 year period.[5]

In the process of exploring through the 492 sermons that were contained

within my 20 year period of research, I made one particular decision of note: the

order in which I did my reading. Rather than reading them in chronological

order, beginning with 1994, I decided instead to read backwards, beginning with

the most recent sermons from 2014 and working my way back to 1994. There

were a number of reasons for this. I was interested in experiencing the feeling of

decreased relationship with topics and information, rather than growing more

comfortable as the years progressed. I wanted to begin to track the moments in

time when certain references or areas became less relatable, less meaningful to

my 2019 ears. If I had jumped all the way back to 1994, the drastic difference in

not only the reality of the sermons, but also my perception of them would have

made it feel like I was reading the texts of a very different period in history. By

reading backwards, beginning with the rabbinic colleagues most similar to my

own time period, I was able to see how certain ideas developed. What I

discovered was that, in this order, the difference between the late 1990s and the

late 2010s wasn't nearly as dramatic as I would have anticipated. For many of the

20 years, student rabbis were discussing how to make Judaism fit within the

ever-changing realities of the modern world. Every year, students were grappling

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[5] Worth noting: Two years of sermons are missing from the Hebrew Union College collection: the 2008-2009 school year, and the 2006-2007 school year. With these offset years, though, it did allow me to read at least one sermon (either the fourth or fifth year) from every student in the cross section. The two years of sermons also does not preclude the kind of statistical claims that will be the underpinning of this research, as 492 sermons remains statistically viable regardless of the outliers that may have existed within those two year windows.

with the rise in popularity of technology. Whether it was the iPhone or the Car Phone, the conversation was surprisingly similar. Likewise, issues of social significance were equally prevalent, despite their seemingly new age perception in the modern day. In 2019, we are still very much exploring gender identities in the rabbinate and beyond, while our 1990s counterparts were asking similar questions, albeit with slightly different context. The notions of intermarriage and liberal Jewish practice are no less new, we simply have a different set of conditions under which we are evaluating them today. While reading in the chronological order would have had the same exact sermons for discourse, it was my response to them that changed by way of the reading order I chose.

There was additional impact from this order of reading as it relates to the sermons dealing with certain current events. Two events in particular, the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001 and the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, were particularly significant in their treatment by student rabbis (both will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 3). By reading the sermons in the order that I did, I was able to see the inverted ripple effects of these significant moments in both Jewish and American history, and to feel the way certain historical moments had an impact on the very foundations of how the student rabbis were engaging with the world around them. The 20 years of sermons (when added to the 5 years of my rabbinical school) result in nearly the entirety of my life[6], yet the words that were written when I was merely an infant were able to resonate in a way that otherwise would have seemed impossible.

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[6] I was born in 1992, only two years outside of the window of my research frame.

One of the difficulties of my findings was that I was looking to learn about the art of homiletics from the transcripts of the sermons offered. In essence, I was taking a three-dimensional experience and boiling it down into its two-dimensional format. While today we have strong video catalogs of the sermons my classmates and I offer, the sermons I studied are available in manuscript form.[7] As a result, it was my task to attempt to bring life to the black and white words on the page, when any student of sermons knows that a significant component of the way a sermon is received is found in the way that the listener reacts to any number of factors, including tone of voice, style of delivery, and environmental factors. This was, at least to a certain degree, helpful in eliminating some of the potential for bias. I was not going to be distracted by the beautiful delivery of an otherwise flat sermon, or the monotone delivery of a work of technical perfection. Yet, it was impossible to ignore the fact that, at a certain level, the reading of a manuscript is an oversimplification of the process of engaging with sermons at all, and must be considered only one element of a far more complex area of study. There are so many factors that are unavailable to me, as a reader of history, that would otherwise help to understand the choices that I am distilling into finite quantifiable answers. At the same time, reading the printed words helps to lift the texts in starker contrast; the scholarship and citation work is far more evident in the manuscripts than in oral form, and helps to explore how preachers used written words to craft their own language.

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[7] Some sermons are available in video form, but not all. In order to understand the kind of research I was exploring, it was important to use the manuscripts in order to evaluate the texts used to make their claims. It also would have been incongruous to use video sermons for some and not others.

Yet, this two-dimensional nature that limits my ability to fully embrace the context of particular decisions does, in many ways, mimic the environment of the listener to the sermon, those who were in attendance at the time of the delivery of the final draft. As a student rabbi, I am well aware of the multitude of factors that go into a particular sermon. There are any number of ideas left out of the final draft, a large section of decisions made along the way to add, cut, or manipulate the end product. By way of evaluating the sermons in their final draft form, tough, as were found in the bound books in the Klau Library, I was imitating the experience of the listener of a sermon. A listener does not have the benefit of additional notes or context. They receive only the final version, and have time, in the listening, to go where the writer takes them. I, too, benefited from a kind of straightforward reading, an evaluation of the final product without any of the notes or outlines that would eventually result in the final experience.

In all, I read 492 sermons to explore the way that student rabbis used textual analysis to make social arguments in sermons from 1994 to 2014. I will, in chapter 2, explore the data for how the sources were used on a macro-level, and will also use the structural and exegetical decisions of the preacher to make certain arguments about the process of how scriptural and cultural tradition is brought to life in the modern Reform Jewish modality. Yet, as much as each data point will hold its significance in chapter 2, I couldn't help but find myself comparing each of these sermons to the famous Georges Seurat painting, A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte. In his genre-defining work of pointillism, Seurat uses millions of small dots to bring together the colors of the painting, each individual dot melding into the larger narrative of the larger

image. It is, in essence, the same for this thesis. While I will make reference to a great number of individual anecdotes from my research findings, there are, in almost every example, dozens of other examples of similar decisions and applications. Yet, in order to fully understand the deep tapestry of the way that Reform rabbinical students engage with their relationship with their preaching, it is important to both explore many of the colors (to extend the metaphor) that make up the painting, as well as the painting as a whole. Assuming that each individual gave two sermons over their fourth and fifth year, any single student is only responsible for .004% of the larger body of research. Yet, as we are reminded by the oft cited text of Pirkei Avot, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me?"[8] If any one of these preachers hadn't put forward their dot on the larger canvas of the homiletic landscape, we would likely be looking at a profoundly different image.

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[8] Mishnah Avot 1:14

Chapter 1: Structure

In his 2004 book, *The Seven Basic Plots*[9], Christopher Booker suggested that there are only seven fundamental story structures into which every book, movie, and story falls. Despite all of the complexities of details, when boiled down to their most basic elements, every act of storytelling falls into one of these seven archetypes. The same can very well be said of the sermon.

This is, of course, an oversimplification. By nature of their very nuance, there are millions of ways that stories shift, change, and differentiate. Otherwise, it would be easy enough for an individual to read only a dozen or so books and learn everything there is to know about the world. Obviously not the case, yet there is comfort in the structural bounds that allow a reader to play within the literary expectations of the genre to which they are relating. Readers and viewers have all felt the disappointment at learning that the major plot development that was so shocking was actually only a dream; this is upsetting because it violates the belief in the expectation of genre. We think we know what we are reading, until a slight of hand takes away our moorings.

In much the same way, the homiletic structure employed by rabbinical students generally fall into very set styles, especially as they relate to their use of textual references. This makes a great deal of sense. As students begin to learn the art of homiletics, they are taught very basic building-blocks of the sermonic

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[9] Booker, Christopher, *Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories.* Bloomsbury Continuum, 2019.

task. They are taught to use five-paragraph structures, with thesis and antithesis battling against one another. They are given the tools by which to learn the basics, with the understanding that, as their skills grow, so too will their ability to work outside of the set "rules" will expand.

Over the 20 year period from 1994 to 2014, student sermons at HUC-Cincinnati fell into four main categories as observed through this study: read and question, posit and search, *parashah* and launch, and the interpretive weave. Each of these four approaches produces a very different relationship with the texts that are cited, and gives a very different look at the way the preacher builds a relationship with the Torah portion. Each of these four structures articulates a different attitude toward the way that text teaches and informs the larger thesis of the sermon in question. Each of these four modalities gives insight into the way that a student rabbi will try to lift the words of sacred tradition off of the scroll and inject them into the world in which they live. And, at the most basic level, each of these approaches helps a preacher to put their message forward in ways that they hope will maximize clarity and effectiveness.

It would be reckless to overstate that there are only four sermons, and that all of the sermons offered fall into one of these rigid formulas. Yet, when we find an overwhelming majority of the 492 sermons using nearly identical approaches to interpretation, the significance of these structural patterns is impossible to ignore. More than they represent rulebooks by which a student forces their sermon to abide, these structures display the attitudes with which a student addressed their interaction with tradition.

As stated in the introduction, there is, of course, a distinction between the "text-based" sermon of the 4th year students and the "non-text" sermon of the 5th year students. Earlier I articulated that a "non-text sermon" is a misnomer, in that 5th year students were still expected to undergird their argument in text, even though they were not obligated to begin with the *parashat ha'shavuah.* Moreover, the statistical data shows that these 5th year students turned down the opportunity, with almost all using the *parashah* as their starting point before beginning their conversation of choice. Rabbinical students, it would appear, are nearly incapable of engaging in sermonizing without at least paying some attention to the Torah reading of the week in question. This can teach us two contradictory lessons. On the one hand, this demonstrates an attention to timeliness. Reference to the Torah portion for the week helps to ground the validity of a conversation, helps to demonstrate to the listener that the values from Torah are relevant and relatable, let alone timely for a weekly conversation.[10] At the same time, a strict adherence to the Torah cycle restricts a level of creativity, forcing a student rabbi to be passionate about a topic based on the date on the calendar, rather than the calling of their own thoughts and opinions. At the same time that the timely text provides support, it also restricts creativity; a student rabbi forced to ground their argument in text often would arrive at a claim that was more basic and simplistic than what might be offered if

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[10] It is worth noting that the base assumption for many students was that the portion of the week was their boundary, and that their work would have to bring forward the significance of the *parashah* to which they had been assigned. The act of getting the Torah portion to say what a preacher was hoping to say for them self was, in and of itself, a big piece of the homiletic analysis.

they had their druthers. All of which is to say that while the task of the 4th and 5th

year students may appear to be different in theory, practical application

demonstrates that it is perfectly reasonable to assess all of the sermons with the

same interpretative lens, putting each of them into one of the four most

significant sermon structures.[11]

There is yet one more element that must be discussed before exploring

these four basic structures of student sermons, the aforementioned challenge of

the manuscript. As articulated in the introduction, the greatest challenge of this

area of research was exploring the impact of a spoken sermon by way of the

manuscript that is left behind. By looking at the manuscripts, it is actually easier

to see the basic structures of a sermon, because of the flattening of the experience

into two-dimensional modalities. In a sense, it becomes an over-simplification of

an over-simplification. Yet, upon deeper consideration, the structure is actually a

basic building block of what allows the sermon to jump from the page into the

ears of the listening congregation. A well-articulated structure is easier for a

community to receive, allows for a student rabbi to be better understood within

the confines of the genre, so to speak. In much the same way that we know the

rules of a comedy when we enter a movie theater as opposed to those of a horror

film, we too are able to feel the difference when a student rabbi begins with text

and expands from there, as opposed to when they begin with a question and head

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[11] Again, by very nature of the task of creative a list of categories, this is not the only exhaustive way of assessing the sermons. While these four categories, as I describe them, made the most sense in my exploration of the almost 500 sermons, another researcher may have found any number of other ways to sort their findings into groups. While this is not the ONLY way to evaluate the information gathered, it is representative of a large percentage of the total data collected.

to the text for answers.[12] The structure gives simple invitations for understanding by the *kahal*, and thus lowers the barrier for entry into the application of text into the timely world of the listener.

With that, let us explore these basic homiletic structures.

Read and Question

The first of the structures is perhaps the easiest to understand, as it matches the process most students take in beginning their preparation for a sermon. "Read and Question" involves first reading through the Torah portion for the week, and finding places of uncertainty, discomfort, or curiosity. This is the way in which a student rabbi allows the text to speak first, and only after uncovering a point of interest within the text does the preacher add their own work to the process.

"Read and Question" is best thought of in terms of the process of exegesis, the examination and interpretation of meaning from a text. The text itself drives the conversation, and the reader is given the opportunity to engage with what they find, in order to adhere to the lessons found within.

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[12] This is an example of the psychological idea of structuralism, which allows for the mind to segment the world into segments that can be easily identified and ordered. In essence, structuralism allows for a human being to go through the world and "understand" what is seen without having to do the extensive work of evaluating each and every example that occurs. This is especially helpful in the work of a preacher, who can use structuralism to allow a listener to go with them to certain conclusions without having to explain every step of the way; in essence, it allows for assumptions that ease in the process of comprehension.

Monica Meyer, in 2013, examined *Shirat HaYam*, the Song of the Sea[13], the Torah portion for their assigned week.[14] Having read the text, Meyer asks the question: "Are the Israelites right to celebrate their victory so fervently in light of so much violence? How can we share in their joy while innocent people perish behind them? Is this God, an aggressive and destructive God, the kind of deity with whom we want to cultivate a personal relationship? Is this a God we like?"[15] The text itself does not do enough to satisfy Meyer's curiosity, and leaves a very different theological question in its wake. The subsequent sermon is Meyer's effort to harmonize the text with a world that, without their interpretation, would have run in contradiction with the textual tradition.

This same goal can be accomplished in the form of filling a perceived gap in the text. One of the hardest tasks of textual analysis is to evaluate that which isn't there; much as I can only see the finished product of a sermon manuscript, so too do preachers struggle with the places where the text itself is less than clear about what happens in the white space between the black letters. In attempting to understand the somewhat obscure narrative of Jacob's wrestling with the angel, Michelle Werner, in 2005, writes "I believe that our faith as Jews is largely formed around uncertainty, ambiguity, a well-spring of questions with no definitive answers."[16] As a result of these questions, Werner uses Midrash as the "answer" to their questions as a result of their initial evaluation of the Torah

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[13] Exodus 15
[14] Without knowledge of the individuals in question and their preferred gender identities, I will refer to all preachers using "they/them" pronouns, unless personal knowledge of the individuals' preferences is known.
[15] Meyer, 2013, 4th Year Sermon
[16] Werner, 2005, 5th Year Sermon

portion, and attempts to find comfort in the places where text isn't enough. This is, after all, the very nature of textual engagement. No text can possibly give every answer and fill every need. Werner is joined in this process of filling in the white space in 1998, when Joseph Meszler attempts to understand Dinah's silence in the story of *Vayishlach*. He asks "Can we learn to listen to the silences in the Torah? More importantly, can we learn to sense the silent absences of God's justice from the world around us?"[17] Meszler's reading of the text left them with a sense of discomfort with the silence, a discomfort that they attempt to harmonize through their exegetical reading of commentary texts (including Rashi, Talmud, Nehchama Leibowitz, and more). Meszler even attempt to bring the silence of Dinah into resonance with the perception of injustice in the world in which the writer lives, thereby allowing the reading of the text to turn into a process of engagement with that world in a way that is both relatable and accessible to the modern reader and listener.

Yet, the process is not complete simply by reading the text and feeling the various questions, holes, and challenges. Instead, a preacher must find ways to bring the text from the page into the very lives of engaged Jews. It is here that Lindsey Williams, in 1994, sets the example, when they read the story of the *Akedah*. Having begun with the Toraitic characters, Willaism then applies the biblical traits to archetypes of their own, each with their of way of living the lessons learned from the original text. With each characteristic, Williams brings the ideas from the biblical narrative into the lives of a modern day iteration and

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[17] Meszler, 1998, 5th Year Sermon

example, in order to demonstrate the ways in which text can inform the understanding of the world in which these people live. Williams concluded their sermon, saying "As we face the struggles of our lives, may we, like Abraham, find the strength of faith to endure them and triumph over them."[18] In order for Williams to make their point, the lessons Abraham has to teach must be applied to a modern parallel, only later re-examining our original understanding of the Torah narrative.

The most common way to develop a relationship with text is to read it and draw conclusions from one's own reaction to it. It is through this that a preacher performs the exegetical process of "Read and Question," bringing insight through one's area of focus. In any given Torah portion, there are any number of possible narratives, whether they be the stories of Genesis or the laws of Leviticus. In each case, it is through the interpretive act of focus that the student rabbis give direction to the congregation, and through the preacher's own questions that listeners are brought to new conclusions.

Posit and Search

Whereas "Read and Question" begins with text, "Posit and Search" begins instead with the individual's own thoughts and opinions. This style of textual engagement involves a student rabbi posing some form of question, and then looking to the text to help bring clarity to that topic of conversation. This often comes in the form of the question: "What does Judaism have to say about…"

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[18] Williams, 1994, 4th year Sermon

In the same way that the first style of textual analysis is the home of exegesis, "Posit and Search" is home to eisegesis, the process of reading one's own values into a text in order to draw out a message or understanding. Those seeking to perform this kind of textual reading are often attempting to string a series of ideas together, in order to make a point about the larger way that text connects to a particular topic or idea.

In 2008, Ari Rosenberg was particularly concerned with the contemporary issue of torture as it related to the Iraq War. Therefore, they undertook to evaluate the ways in which Jewish sources have engaged with the topic across Jewish history. No, there is no reference to the tactic of waterboarding in Torah. It isn't as simple as applying the textual reference that speaks directly to the issues of, say, *kashrut* or harvesting practices. Instead, Rosenberg establishes a base claim, the idea that all of God's creation is to be treated with dignity, and works backward to arrive at the conclusion that the modern practice of torture violates that base value. They write "We must, however, distinguish capital punishment from torture, which is never permitted under any circumstances...when we practice waterboarding upon the image of God, we defile God."[19] One of the risks with this line of textual analysis is that it requires a certain leap from the strict reading of the text to the interpretative. But, by very nature of seeking to engage the ancient tradition with the lives of the modern Jew, this is a necessary way of making the old speak to the new in ways that are desirable for the contemporary congregant.

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[19] Rosenberg, 2008, 5th Year

One of the places where this task becomes the most deeply engaging, though, is when different points in time speak to the same ideas in different voices. While Rosenberg seemed to have taken the issue of capital punishment at face value in 2008, David Locketz spoke at length about the Jewish view on the death penalty in 2003. Separated by a half-decade, these two sermons each address a very similar issue, and arrive at different results. Locketz offers the following thesis: "Capital punishment exists because evil exists in the world that can only be punished by death. The Torah agrees with this...but the question that still follows directly for me is, 'how can we capture the right person?'"[20] After having explored all of the various textual references to the death penalty, Locketz essentially imitates the statement from Mishnah Makkot that states that a Sanhedrin that puts anyone to death over a seven year period is considered murderous.[21] Locketz explores all of these such references, and then reframes them, in order to speak to the particular issue at hand during their time period (in this case, the trial of OJ Simpson.)

Sometimes this stringing together of references begins with text and expands to all iterations of a particular idea or message. Joel Mosbacher, in 1997, begins with the word "Amen," a word common to so many faiths and cultures. Yet, they trace the usage of Amen across a multitude of texts, from Torah to TaNaKh, liturgy to Talmud and Midrash. There is nothing to bond these disjointed texts together except their use of this word, which leads Mosbacher to conclude, "It is not difficult- perhaps it is even superfluous – to lift up our voices

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[20] Locketz, 2003, 4th Year
[21] Mishnah Makkot 1:10

in praise when we are rejoicing. The challenge is to be able to do so in times of

great sadness, fear, and loss. The difficulty is to accept the curses as well as the

blessings – a difficult task indeed."[22] A single use of the word "Amen" isn't

enough to come to this conclusion. It is by way of stringing together a number of

references and bonding them together with interpretation that this statement can

be made and grounded in Jewish conceptualization.

Herein lies the strength of the model of "Posit and Search." As a preacher

attempts to find meaning in the world around them, they are tasked with doing

so through a specifically Jewish lens. The very mandate by which a student

ascends the pulpit is to provide a Jewish perspective on the subject in question.

Thus, it is through an analysis and juxtaposition of sources into a Jewish chain

that results in eisegesis that is done with care and attention to both what Judaism

has said, and what student rabbis are able to say in Judaism's voice.

Parshah and Launch

While each of the last two styles offers a form of textual analysis based on

extracting meaning from the text, "*Parshah* and Launch" is the opportunity to go

off in a new direction. This is commonly the approach used in cases where a

student rabbi wishes to speak about a subject of personal importance, sometimes

without any explicit support from the textual tradition. This does, in a sense,

begin much the same way as "Read and Question;" a preacher starts by looking to

the Torah portion and finding something within it that drives a conversation of

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[22] Mosbacher, 1997, 5th Year Sermon

importance to the community. At this point, though, the homilist departs from adherence to textual tradition and instead journeys off into territory of their own.

This is the place where popular culture references are most commonly used.[23] That is because these are the places where a brief reference to text gives "permission" to the student rabbi to discuss other areas, without needing Jewish tradition to continue to support their conversation.

Having been assigned the Torah portion *Mikeitz*, student rabbi Alan Cook, in 2001, undertook to explore the ramifications of the Joseph narrative on self-worth and, in turn, self-care. Cook uses a line of text from the Torah portion, reading, "We once were a group of twelve brothers, but the youngest one is with our father today, and one is no longer."[24] This line, though, is subsequently used to explore the way in which identity is formed, specifically as it relates to how Joseph must have felt hearing that he "is no longer." The Torah, meanwhile, makes no such leaps from the text to self-worth. Cook goes on to use a multitude of references, from motivational speaker John Bradshaw to *Death of a Salesman*, and Maimonides, each tracing their way back to Cook's claim that "true self-care would require that we work, as Joseph did, to achieve a balance between these two extremes...we each must work to attain a greater appreciation of our own self-worth."[25] Once again, it is something of a leap to claim that the Torah is attempting to teach a lesson of self-worth and self-care. Yet, in order to arrive at

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[23] For a fuller discussion of the benefits and pitfalls of popular culture references, see chapter 3. Most notably, pop culture references are used frequently, but rarely is any single reference used with any significant regularity, indicating the breadth (but not depth) of the discussion of popular societal references.

[24] Genesis 42:13. Translation pulled directly from the treatment of Alan Cook.

[25] Cook, 2001, 4th Year Sermon

such claims with any degree of Jewish integrity, Cook uses the Torah portion assigned to them and brought their own personal message forth after having launched from the original text.

Some of the examples of a "*Parshah* and Launch" move seamlessly from point A to point B. In the case of Howard Needleman, for example, in 1997, Jacob's dream in *Vayeitzei* is the inspiration for his treatment of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream," speech, one they imitate with their own version of the speech, this time applying the dream to the future of the Reform Movement. It is not an enormous intellectual leap to connect Yisrael to King, but the act of doing so allowed Needleman to offer the "real" sermon that they intended to offer by way of a launch point grounded in the weekly Torah reading.[26] The well-known example of King's speech enabled Needleman to develop the story of Jacob's dream into a vision of the Reform Jewish future. At the same time, the connection runs both directions; it is possible that Needleman would never have discussed dreams in this way if it were not for the timeliness of the Torah cycle. This sermon proves the idea that a little bit of text goes a long way to establish the authentic voice of a preacher, grounding contemporary conversations in Torah text.

Interpretive Weave

Whereas the other styles of textual analysis all involve some level of interpretation of the text, the "Interpretive Weave" is, in effect, the process of

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[26] Needleman, 1997, 5th Year Sermon

living the text through a sermon. In one way or another, the homilist takes the text for the week and reimagines it, adding lenses through which the listener is going to reevaluate the way that the reading is meant to feel or be received. This process is, in effect, a modern day Midrash. These sermons help to guide a reader or listener to consider another way of thinking about the original scripture, and to offer one's own spin on how the text can be reinterpreted with the injection of another point of view.

Sometimes this comes in the form of a first-person reconstruction of a character who had not, in the eyes of the preacher, received their full shot at offering their voice. Mark Kaiserman, in 1997, gave a retelling of Aaron's perspective of the Torah portion *Ki Tisa*, in which they write in the voice of Aaron, "As my own death nears, I realize now that my brother had been generous and protecting…I could easily have been one of the slaughtered. If the sin was my fault, then maybe I should have been the first to die. But Moses kept me alive and safe .Some have even said that Moses talked God out of killing me."[27] In order to inspire empathy with and connection to a Toraitic character who so often is seen but not heard, Kaiserman assumes the voice of Moses' brother and gives an alternative perspective on how to think about Aaron's impending textual demise.

This is, by far, the least popular of the four stylistic themes discussed in this chapter. There is, though, in almost every year of study at least one student who seeks to take on an interpretive experience, in order to take possession of the text in such a way that it speaks with a voice that has a stronger sense of

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[27] Kaiserman, 1997, 5th Year Sermon

connection to that preacher. Some, like Kaiserman, do this in the form of a kind of retelling, an acting out of a particular interpretation of the text. Other students create a parallel between a text and the world in which the listener exists, crafting a tapestry of interpretation and laying upon the foundation of text a particular model of "living out" the values of text.

Using Isaac's digging of wells found in *Toldot*,[28] Michael Shulman explores the ways in which Torah informs our experience of the Holocaust, commemorating the Warsaw Uprising and the way that Jews today consider both their own history and the way they interact with the narrative of others. They write "We are Isaac when we are vigilant for signs of ethnic cleansing and genocide. We are Isaac when we become partners with gays and lesbians to help combat homophobia. We will always be Isaac when we fight against our inclinations to prejudge and stereotype others."[29] It is not enough simply to draw the connection between the Jewish text and the experience of the Holocaust. And it is not enough to draw the connection between the Jewish past and the present for the modern marginalized person. Rather, in order to paint the picture with empathic undertones, Shulman insists on living the Torah narrative with their own eyes, walking each story in step together to lay the feelings and experiences upon one another to notice the similarities.

In pursuit of creativity, the "Interpretive Weave" works to add something that hadn't existed before, to alter the original relationship between the Torah portion and the way that modern day individuals interact with the lessons and

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[28] Exodus 26
[29] Shulman, 2002, 5th Year Sermon

ideals. While it may be the least common of the four styles, this one is, perhaps, the most difficult to do with any degree of grace and authenticity. It is no small feat to attempt to speak while assuming the voice of the biblical writers. It is no small task to attempt to see one's self reflected in the stories and lessons from ancient tradition. It is through this stylistic model of engaging with the text, though, that a preacher is able to, in using the popular aphorism, show, rather than tell a listener how Judaism fits into their lives. A dialogue between God and Moses, a skit that depicts the way certain ideas and messages are portrayed, a poem that puts the traditional into a modern vehicle each allow a preacher to make the words come to life in a different way, in the hopes that the listener will do the same for themselves, finding the way they, in turn, can see themselves reflected in the writings of Judaism.

Conclusion

Each of the examples of the four prototypes of textual engagement are just one of many. And while classifying almost 500 sermons into one of four categories may seem to be overly simplistic, it does get to the nature of the relationship that student rabbis display as they undertake to analyze the text. Does the Torah portion sit in the driver's seat with the preacher along for the ride? Does the homilist get to decide the direction and cherry pick the texts that most coherently go with their particular opinion or approach? Or, alternatively, does the text become part of the preacher's understanding of reality in order to meld into a single understanding of the world in which they live.

Many of the 492 sermons processed for this thesis don't fit into one of these four categories. But, over and over again, the exceptions continued to prove the rule, as each example of a more creative or outlandish sermon that differed from the standard operating procedures wound up with the same conundrum: how does one ground their sermon in Jewish tradition in order to validate their right to speak on a topic in the first place. To alter a textual reference of my own, "if sermons are not about Judaism, then who are they for? And if I, as a preacher, am not preaching about Judaism, what am I?"[30]

In this chapter, we explored the ways in which student rabbis went about making sense of the textual references that they used, and the inspiration for their conversations on topics of Jewish importance. Beyond simply the Torah portion, though, the next two chapters will begin to look at the quantitative data regarding which texts were most commonly used, what that says about the modern Reform rabbinical student's relationship to text and history, and how we can best make sense of the tools we use to make sense of our tradition and our world.

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[30] A playful reference to Hillel's famous question in Mishnah Avot 1:14.

Chapter 2: Quantitative Analysis of Source Work

Having explored the ways that student rabbis choose to format their exploration of text, most specifically Torah, we now turn our attention to the choices a preacher makes in fleshing out the larger collection of sources used to craft their homiletic piece. In reading through 492 sermons, my task was to take note of each source used and tabulate some of the meta-implications of the findings.

In total, within 492 sermons[31], there were 900 individual sources cited 2,738 times. This comes to an average of 3.04 citations per source reference, and 5.57 sources per sermon. It is important to reiterate that, by nature of constructing a conversation on macro-data, these averages are painting with an unfairly broad brush. There are some sources, as we will discuss later, that are cited over 50 times, while a great many others are cited only once. It would be impossible to claim that Rashi or Maimonides has the same significance to the homiletic process as, say, Pixar's *A Bug's Life.* Yet, for our purposes, the averages allow us to see the way that certain trends form over time, and how those choices change, grow, and adapt depending on certain other environmental factors.

Of course, attempting to count all of the references to a particular source involves a certain degree of judgement on the part of the reader as to what constitutes a "text". In my assessment, a source was considered any reference to an external voice that was not that of the preacher. I separated the findings into

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[31] Again, a reminder: two years were missing from the data set. This is unlikely to have skewed the data so dramatically that claim cannot be made about the general patterns of 20 years of student rabbi homiletic choices.

eight categories, in order to better understand the general approach to text. These eight categories included:

1. Torah portions[32]

2. Bible (TaNaKh)

3. Rabbinic Literature (Mishnah, Midrash, Talmud)

4. Liturgy

5. Traditional Commentators

6. Modern Thinkers

7. Organizational doctrines/Platforms

8. Popular Culture

Again, these categories are, to a certain degree, arbitrary. The difference between, for example, a commentator and a modern thinker is not mutually exclusive, nor is a pop culture reference about religion entirely easy to put into a category. On the whole, though, this allowed me to see certain trends, including how student rabbis were choosing to preference certain areas of Jewish tradition in contrast with others.[33] Liturgical references, for example, are made with the same regularity as references to Mishnah Avot, only one book within a larger rabbinic library. These distinctions help to guide the processing of the information, more so than it should be taken at face value.

Once again, it is important to bear in mind the very nature of the sources available to us, while also remaining attentive to the sheer complexity of the

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[32] Not inherently the assigned *parashah*, but rather Torah references generally.
[33] When tabulating the macro-statistical findings, these categories played no role at all. They were exclusively for the purpose of deciphering patterns from the data set.

sources that might not be included in a final version of a sermon. There are any number of influences that drive an individual to put together a sermon of personal significance. As best as possible, this is an attempt to evaluate finished products, the sermon that was delivered by a student rabbi. Any textual influences that led to the decision made will, unfortunately, have to remain a mystery for the time being.

The most straight-forward references are, of course, those made to Torah. In total, 49 sermons were mentioned[34], with 544 total references to the five books of Moses. There is a wide gap in the total number of references made for each particular Torah portion. *Parshat HaAzinu*, for example, is only referred to on three occasions. This can be explained by where it falls in the academic calendar. During that time in the year, services are not usually held in the Sheuer Chapel. Students are most often preparing for the High Holy Days, and are away on break serving communities, and thus are not offering their senior sermons. Most of the Torah portions found in the book of Numbers are the ones entirely omitted from our data, not because of any lack of meaningful content, but because of their reading assigned during the summer, when students are not on campus, and thus are not assigned that reading for their senior sermon. While *Parshat Korach* might have a great many lessons to teach, student rabbis generally do not find themselves searching for such portions in order to make their point for their sermon, as is indicated by *Korach* having no mentions at all.

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[34] While 49 were referenced, two sermons were referenced as a paired-portion, B'har/Bechukotai and Tazria/Metzora. While they are each referenced in the data, they are considered a single unit each in tabulation of frequency, as they were referred to in tandem in almost all cases.

At the same time, a Torah portion like *Parshat Vayera* (the most frequently mentioned with 30 total citations) and *Parshat Mishpatim* (second most with 25 references) are used more frequently than just the 18 total times[35] that one might have been assigned that particular week. This brings to light the way the Torah portion is used to articulate a larger point, something done very well with the dramatic narratives found in *Vayera* and the sequences of laws found in *Mishpatim*. Thus, more references are made to portions like this, indicating that preachers were making extra Toraitic references, despite their being outside of the purview of the particular assigned weekly *parshah*.

On the whole, Torah is the most straightforward of all of the areas of citation. Most Torah portions receive somewhere between 10 and 20 references, with a few outliers. It is when we open up our analysis to the other sources where the data becomes far more diverse and evocative.

The hardest category to quantify with any coherence was the rabbinic literature brought forward by student rabbis. In total, there were 448 references to Mishnah, Midrash, and Talmud, comprising 17% of total references. But not all citations were straightforward. Unlike any other category of reference, rabbinic literature was responsible for two "citations" that were most difficult to pin down: the general indications of "Talmud" and "Midrash". In total, 30 student rabbis referred to Talmud in the most general sense, referring to the entire canon of tradition as a single unit, without any indication of a specific book, page, or line. Similarly, 54 student rabbis discussed "Midrash" as a category, rather than any

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[35] Again, this is in reference to 2008-2009 and 2006-2007, which were not available from the HUC-JIR library, and were thus omitted from the final conclusions.

particular cited Midrash. Rather than attempt to identify each of these texts, it is perhaps more telling to explore why these general tags were used, rather than a more specific naming of a textual location. First, it is worth noting that many Midrashic and Talmudic texts are indeed cited specifically. In fact, Bereshit Rabbah is one of the most popularly cited sources in total, even when factoring that many of the 54 general "Midrash" citations likely come from this font of wisdom. Yet, it is also worth noting that Midrash is more commonly sourced in the general than Talmud, not because it is more popular, but because Talmud is more likely to be cited accurately with book and page number, whereas Midrash is more comfortably used in the abstract. Student rabbis are, it would appear, more comfortable living with the ambiguity of referring to "Midrash" than they are leaving a Talmud citation vague. This also stands to reason considering the popularity of the term "modern Midrash," indicating that Midrash is a more fluid, evolving canon than is Talmud, and thus is open to the interpretive manipulation of a preacher in a way that Talmud simply is not.

The following chart indicates the ten most commonly referred-to sources, and the number of times they are mentioned in the 20 year span of this research:

1. Rashi	108
2. Maimonides[36]	62
3. Pirkei Avot	60

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[36] It is worth noting that Maimonides does, in a certain way, write with two distinct voices; the philosophy of the *Moreh N'vuchim* rings with a very different tone than does the *Halakhah* of the *Mishneh Torah.* For the purpose of learning the frequency with which his scholarship is cited, though, he is analyzed as a single historical character.

4. Nachmanides	57
5. Bereshit Rabbah	43
6. Psalms	41
7. Ibn Ezra	35
8. Abraham Joshua Heschel	34
9. W. Gunther Plaut[37]	27
10. Proverbs	23

It likely does not come as much of a surprise that Rashi and Maimonides, two of Jewish history's greatest minds, rank 1 and 2 in most frequent mentions. While not quite contemporaries of one another, their presence in proximity to one another on the list makes clear the honor afforded to Medieval commentators. But why, one might ask, does Rashi outpace Rambam by nearly double? It would appear nearly impossible to really quantify the influence of one thinker over another, and yet the data reflects that students were 1.7 times more likely to turn to the French thinker rather than his Sephardic counterpart. Why, even, does Nachmanides wind up receiving nearly the same attention as Maimonides?

The most obvious answer is found in the subject matters to which they are most commonly considered. Rashi and Nachmanides are generally classified as Biblical commentators. Their commentaries was to read the biblical texts and

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[37] The vast majority of Plaut's references come from his Torah commentary, but not exclusively so.

offer their own thoughts, opinions, and suggestions about how these texts were to be internalized by the reading public. These works match the work being done by a student rabbi in preaching a sermon. Rashi and Nachmanides, when applied to the structural decisions made in Chapter 1, make sense for understanding how one is supposed to think about the Torah portion in front of them. Maimonides, meanwhile, is far more of a philosophical and legal thinker. While his Mishneh Torah is certainly an extensive resource of understanding text conceptually, the Guide to the Perplex is a far more vexing document, one that likely would have required a much deeper analysis than a student rabbi would have been willing to give in a brief sermon. Along the way, it would likely cause the preacher to lose their own message in the hopes of describing Maimonides'. Despite his fame as one of the most substantial thinkers in Jewish tradition, Maimonides is far surpassed by Rashi when it comes to the references to textual understanding, as Maimonides would require a level of homiletic explication that many would deem both inefficient and confusing.

It is also of note within the top ten list that the books of Psalms and Proverbs are two of the most commonly cited Biblical texts. These are not necessarily the most significant lessons that the Hebrew Bible has to offer the Jewish community. But the very style by which Psalms and Proverbs are written lends them very well to the kind of citation common in a rabbinic sermon. Proverbs are, by nature of the way we come to understand their very name, short collections of saying and quips. They are easily cited with very little context, and drop a very tightly packed collection of wisdom neatly into a sermon without need for much explanation. These sources are also common references in

classical Midrashim, offering a poetic launch point for their own creativity, much the same way as rabbinic students make reference in order to do their own creative work. The same is true for Mishnah Avot, far and away the most common book of rabbinic literature featured. There are many possible explanations for the ways in which certain texts are selected for inclusion in a sermon. It becomes clear in the data set, though, that those texts that are self-contained in such a way as to render them easily inserted into a larger sermon narrative puts them at an overwhelming advantage over some of the more prophetic texts.

This does, of course, come into a certain degree of conflict with the notion that the Reform movement is espousing a form of prophetic Judaism[38]. While Isaiah certain gets his due, with 20 citations, the subsequent prophets see a considerable drop-off, with the next leading prophets, Micah and Ezekiel, each only receiving eight mentions. Does this mean that the Reform affection for prophecy is a myth? Unlikely. Rather, this is one of the places where it is most likely that form takes precedence over content. The analysis required to fit ideology into a sermon of this nature can, at times, be burdensome and overly complicated, at least in the eyes of the preacher. In those moments, student rabbis choose to omit the ideology in favor of a more streamlined message.

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[38] According the Union for Reform Judaism website, Rabbi Maria Feldman describes the deep connection between advocacy and Reform values. They write, "To be a Reform Jew is to hear the voice of the prophets in our head; to be engaged in the ongoing work of *tikkun olam*; to strive to improve the world in which we live."

This comes into even sharper contrast when considering some of the kinds of voices that are most prominently on display in the sermons of rabbinical students. One would likely guess that Isaac Mayer Wise, the founder of Hebrew Union College, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the now-Union for Reform Judaism, would come up rather frequently in conversation. This does not bear fruit: only four references are made to Wise during that time period, amounting to .08% of all sermons. The same might have been assumed regarding Abraham Geiger, a "founding father" of Reform Judaism and a cornerstone in the identify formation of the Reform Movement at large. Yet, Geiger matches Wise with only four references across the 20 years of sermons. There are any number of possible explanations as to why the strongest voices for Reform Judaism as we know it today weren't included regularly in the process of senior sermons: their time period, perhaps, or the conversations regarding denominationalism could feel distant to a late 20th of early 21st century community. All those explanations, however, are problematic when we consider the case of Samson Raphael Hirsch.

Hirsch was an Orthodox rabbi in Germany in the 19th century. More than that, though, he was the ideological progenitor of the neo-Orthodox movement in Germany, pitting him as a contradiction to the reform concepts coming out of the same region.[39] His life span reflects almost identically against Geiger (who was born after Hirsch but died before him) and Wise (born after and outlived Hirsch). Yet, amongst Hirsch's many accomplishments and biographical notes, one of his most significant opinions, during this time period, was his opposition to Reform

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[39] In this regard, he is exactly the kind of person Isaac Mayer Wise WOULDN'T want cited in the chapel of his rabbinical school.

Judaism. In many ways, Hirsch is the great opponent to what Wise and Geiger were attempting to do in Germany and America.

Yet, rabbinical students demonstrate quite the affinity for Hirsch. 20 references are made to him, with an overwhelming skew toward the positive. Once again, rabbinical students demonstrate a willingness to use a source as a font of information, regardless of the ethical implications of such a citation. Hirsch was well known for, among other things, his Torah commentary, which is the major work most used by students in their senior sermons.[40] Therefore, student rabbis were willing to use the information they gleaned from his ideas about Torah, even while his personal writing and ideology were in direct contrast with their own values as religious Jews. Three times in the year 2000, for example, student rabbis made reference to Hirsch's commentaries, including references to his interpretation of Abraham's weeping in Genesis 23[41], the qualities of a covenant in Genesis 17[42], and the dangers of ignorance in Leviticus 5.[43] In each of these cases, Hirsch's ideological tendencies play no obvious role; instead, his Torah commentary provides texture to an argument alongside other examples.[44]

Geiger and Hirsch are maybe the most straightforward example of a case where students choose accessibility of text over ideology. A Bible commentary

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[40] By contrast, Abraham Geiger did not write a Bible commentary, likely leading to his relative obscurity when it comes to the research data.
[41] Henrich, 2000, 5th Year Sermon
[42] Gevurtz, 2000, 4th Year Sermon
[43] Conforti, 2000, 4th Year Sermon
[44] Each of the citations above (Henrich, Gevurtz, and Conforti) make reference to Hirsch in sequence with other thinkers, including Rashi and Nehama Leibowitz (each commentators as well)

that offers insight is worthwhile to a preacher, regardless of its authorship. But other such cases exist. Why, for example, are there dozens of references to the Hasidic movement, when the values of Hasidism and Reform are, at the very least, tangential to one another? This is likely for a similarly accessible reason; sermons are an easy place to employ stories as homiletic transition or tool. At the same time, one of the central tenants of Reform Judaism is a form of liberal pluralism that invites all voices to be included, even those that challenge Reform ideologies. Orthodox Jewish voices are not meant to be ignored or silenced, but rather contextualized.[45]

Or course, not all references are positive. There are any number of sources used as negatives upon which a student can levy criticism. But it is of particular note that, in cases such as Hirsch's, student rabbis demonstrate an overwhelming willingness to accept the teachings of a writer who, broadly speaking, does not share one's own religious path, but from whom there is an easy thought that can be injected into a larger argument.

This has significant implications for the field of Reform Jewish writing and thinking. There are dozens of Reform thinkers who have any number of thoughtful, considerate, and impactful things to say about a countless number of topics. Many of them are quoted in the 20 year period discussed. But the places where an Orthodox voice is chosen in the place of a Reform counterpart is an indication of the relative accessibility of certain streams of thought, and the ways

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[45] The challenge becomes ensuring that student rabbis are thoughtfully using these texts, rather than simply using what is most easily accessed. The intent of a used citation is much harder to ascertain, and we can only hope that references to Hirsch and Hasidism were done with proper consideration and care.

in which the "easiest" citation is not inherently the one that best accomplishes the goals of the preacher[46]. This is, of course, expecting a lot of student rabbis. A major claim could be made regarding the post-denominational thinking that has certainly come into vogue amongst many thoughtfully engaged Jewish thinkers. These frequent citations of texts of a wide variety of backgrounds does bode well for those hoping for a unified Judaism that puts the teachings of Jews in general above "party" lines. The one qualification to that, though, is the frequent denigration of Reform Jewish perspectives that one hears frequently, especially in Israel. Is it acceptable, for example, to cite a rabbi who would, by very nature, challenge the validity of the *smichah* for which this sermon serves as a qualification? Is it acceptable to use the words of someone who doesn't consider the work these student rabbis are doing is considered "valid?" This is impossible to know for certain, and there certainly isn't a right answer. But it is still a notion that student rabbis must take seriously as they choose which sources to use and which voices to lift up at the expense of their ideals.[47]

Along the same lines, the prevalence of female rabbis during this time period is impossible to ignore. Having ordained the first female rabbi in North America in 1972, Hebrew Union College has seen significant shrinkage in the

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[46] How we define "best" is, of course, difficult to define. By nature of the educational function of the school chapel, best would likely be a level of consideration that delivered a message consistent with both the intent of the student rabbi and in line with the mission statement of the institution writ large.

[47] This paragraph is, in many ways, a personal observation based on my perspective of the data. In a world of ever-growing claims of post-denominationalism, it would be unfair to claim that Reform rabbinic students should be unfairly beholden to Reform voices more emphatically than any other. Yet, it is my belief that a sermon is the truest form of sharing one's own values, and what better place to reinforce the ideas of our history than in the words we share with our congregations and communities?

ration of male to female students, even arriving at the 50% split in the decade of the 2010s. With that, the rise in awareness of the need for religious voices that speak of the woman's perspective of Judaism has been growing. That does not, though, express itself in the form of citations in sermons.

Nehama Leibowitz is referred to 20 times in twenty years. She does find herself in the top 25 most commonly cited sources. Yet, she is the only woman present in the top 50 most frequently referred to sources. The next most frequently cited women are in a multiple-way tie with only two references (sources include Nancy Flam, Ruth Alpers, and Marcia Falk). Overwhelmingly, men outpace women in references, only further demonstrating the lack of attention to the woman's voice in Jewish tradition.

Why, though, might Nehama Leibowitz be such an outlier? And why is this lack of female represented still the case when the voices delivering the sermons are, more and more often, that of a woman? Once again, we return to the issue of biblical commentary. Overwhelmingly, the senior sermons delivered by student rabbis engage in a form of text study that requires exploration and examination of biblical texts, for which a commentator is an incredibly helpful source. Therefore, Leibowitz was a common source because of her frequent teaching regarding biblical texts themselves. It would be impossible to assess how Leibowitz, an Orthodox woman, may have felt being used as the litmus test for feminine representation in textual analysis, but it is easy to imagine that she, like Hirsch, may not be the knight in shining armor in favor of reformation and egalitarianism. Yet, Judith Plaskow, a leading voice in feminist theology, receives

a single reference, in 2013-2014, the very last year of sermon data.[48] The only

unifying factor between Leibowitz and Plaskow is that they are both women.

Plaskow is a thoughtfully engage feminist thinker. Leibowitz does not present her

ideas in any such way. When we look at the data for the evidence of feminist

agendas, there is preciously little to find.

It is obvious that the lack of female voices during this period of research

can be attributed, at least in part, to the ever-slow process of access for students

to the works of such thinkers. We, as students, are well aware of where to search

in the library for Rashi and Heschel, for Buber and the Ba'al Shem Tov. The hope

is that as access to information becomes more and more egalitarian, and more

and more voices are elevated to a level of prominence, then the popularity of

diverse opinions and demographics will continue to grow, only deepening the

font of information from which student rabbis can explore ideas that resonate

with them, and further help to underscore the personal identities that each

student brings with them to the table when they, themselves, seek to share their

own words of Torah.

Traditional Jewish sources are expected in the sermons of fourth and fifth

year rabbinical students. What about the secular culture references that add

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[48] If I may venture to offer a hypothesis for future research, these findings regarding female representation would not exist in the same form if we studied the sources used today. While the likes of Plashkow and HUC's own Rachel Adler have been writing for many years, it is only more recently that their texts have made their way into the standard curriculum on campus, and have become an active component of general discourse amongst students. With the ways in which students are growing ever-more empowered to seek voices that match their own experience of Judaism, there has been a noted anecdotal rise in reference to the voices of women, one that I hope will continue as access to a wide range of perspectives continues to grow.

flavor and texture to the writing, giving accessibility to the listener and bringing a

Jewish value or idea into the 20th or 21st century with modern examples?

In total, there were 274 unique popular culture references, ranging from

United States Presidents to Academy Award winning films and singers of all

genres. Despite the multitude of references, though, there was not a single

reference that carried any level of statistical significance. The most commonly

cited individuals or works from secular society came in a three-way tie with six

references apiece: William Shakespeare, Woody Allen[49], and Martin Luther King

Jr. Coming in at 1.2% of all sermons apiece, this is not the kind of broad-

sweeping popularity one might have expected from some of history's most well-

known and oft-quoted figures.

Take, for example, the Star Wars saga. After a period of dormancy, *Star

Wars: The Phantom Menace* was released in 1999. Over the subsequent half-

decade, a new trilogy was added to the classic Lucas films. This time period falls

squarely in the range of the sermons that contributed to this thesis. It would be

fair to assume, with the popularity of the films and the frequent connection to

Jewish images in connecting the rabbis and the jedi[50], that the Star Wars movies

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[49] Woody Allen brings to light one of the more uncomfortable parts of the research process, in that new information and insight into his character has come forward. There were a number of sources that were referred to in ways that do not stand the test of time. Most notably, Bill Cosby comes up twice. While that isn't a statistically significant total, it certainly wouldn't have happened again in light of recent findings about Cosby's character as a human being, even with his history as a TV personality. The more we learn about the past does not inherently cause more POSITIVE information, and so it is difficult to read charming citations to a character that, with the information we have now, has so significantly fallen from grace.
[50] There is an entire thesis to be written I'm sure regarding the connection of those who try to bring balance to a world in which a divine concept brings both light and darkness. Maybe next trip through rabbinical school...

as a whole would appear fairly regularly over 18 years. But this wasn't the case at all. As a matter of fact, of the two references to Star Wars, one was made in 2000-2001, in the thick of the release of the new movies, while the other was made in 2012-2013, over half a decade after the last film.

In seeking to understand the reasoning behind the inconsistency of pop culture references, it would be easy to posit that the very nature of the senior sermon demands a higher level of intellectualism and formality. In an attempt to be timeless, might students shy away from movies and music in favor of commentators, theologians, and prophets? This does not, however, bear fruit, as there are a total of 334 secular cultural references made, indicating an average of one citation for every 1.4 sermons. No, it isn't that students are too formal to make references to contemporary voices.

Far more compelling is the notion of individuality that comes from a popular cultural reference in a sermon. By adding this texture to a piece, a preacher is crafting the perspective around both what they think the congregation will find relatable, as well as their own personal expression of what connects people. There are any number of examples of the kind of pop culture reference that find their way into the sermons of rabbinical students: from Forrest Gump to Sylvia Plath, from George Washington to Stephen Colbert. Each of the references serves to give a snapshot into the way that a preacher connects with their subject matter, and to how they use the world around them to attempt to engage the listener more deeply. Thus, each individual source demonstrates very little about the popularity of that reference in the larger culture, but instead gives light to how a student rabbi can find meaning in that idea or concept. It would be

ludicrous to claim that Abraham Lincoln (2 references) has had the same cultural impact as Cher (2 references). But the way a student rabbi uses their voices to make meaning is a far more telling indicator of one's own experience than of the actual reach of the cited voice in larger societal influence.

It is a relatively straightforward endeavor to count up all of the citations made in students' sermons and put the data together to form general trends and speculations. It is much harder to learn some of the lessons that this data has to reveal, and the many influences that cause such trends to continue. The task in chapter 3 will be to attempt to understand how these sources were put to use in meaningful terms, to qualify that which we have, to this point, quantified. In the meantime, though, the raw data has something to say that is all-too often explained away at later phases of the homiletic process. Which bookshelves do we return to over and over again, and which ones need more attention? Which voices do we leave behind, in favor of the same tried and true favorites that history has lifted up? What does it say about the future of the rabbinate in terms of the way these students relate to their past? Each of these questions has implications that extend far beyond the time and place that the sermon was delivered.

On the whole, there were 2,738 source citations in the 492 sermons given in the Sheuer Chapel from 1994-2015. This is a reflection of the learning that goes on in the classrooms that share the same building. Of those 2,738, countless many are the reflection of the learning that was done in rabbinical school, culminating in this address. Just as popular culture references are shaped by the personal interests and connection points of the speaker in particular, so too is the synthesis done by each student in arriving to the final sermon they deliver. In

order for each student to use an average of 5.57 sources per sermon, these students must find a way to make almost six voices come together to articulate a single point together. Sometimes that involves allowing different perspectives to come into conflict with one another. Sometimes this involves crafting multiple ideas from across time boundaries to meld together in concert with one another. By very nature, the act of homiletics is one that takes the raw data reflected in this chapter and manipulates it into the singular voice of the preacher, and the message that they wish for their community to hear.

In chapter 3, we will explore how those choices are perceived, and how the sources are used in order to make the contemporary social and communal arguments that are at the center of the homiletic purpose.

Chapter 3: Qualitative Study of Source Application

It is a well-known expression that the numbers speak for themselves. In the case of sermons, though, this isn't inherently the case; it would be entirely possible to write a sermon that is deeply problematic but makes frequent use of text, while a sermon relatively devoid of external references speaks volumes about the world in which we live. Chapter 2 undertook to explore the implications of the quantitative elements of the homiletic task, while preaching is, at its very core, a subjective task that must be evaluated using qualitative findings. Delivering words that speak to the hearts and minds of a congregation is just as much of an art as it is a science, and therefore must be evaluated as such. Now, this does come with an inherent problem: who am I to judge the quality of a particular argument? How would it be fair of me, as any single individual, to judge the quality of the work put forward by a student rabbi? Isn't beauty in the ear of the beholder? And yet, all artforms require a degree of critical analysis in order to process their value and context. It is inherent to the very notion of art that it is evaluated.

Inherent to the task of evaluating sermons is the bifurcation between the intent of the preacher and the way it is received by the congregation. At a certain point, no matter how sound or well-intended the words may have been, they must be let go into the world and evaluated by their efficiency and their profundity. This is a task that is, by its very nature, complicated by the location of its delivery. The Scheuer Chapel on the "Historic Cincinnati Campus of Hebrew Union College" is unlike almost any other venue in which a rabbi will deliver an

address. Rarely will a rabbi be expected to deliver a sermon to a community with the kind of advanced Jewish education that is present amongst the faculty and fellow students. Therefore, it is not uncommon for student rabbis to feel the need to beef up their writing, in order to meet the perceived level of rigor of study. Sermons in the field are far less likely to include the kind of citations that are commonplace in the Scheuer Chapel, in order to demonstrate the level of learning that has been accomplished at school; after all, if this sermon is meant to serve as a culmination of the time at school, why wouldn't a student want to bring in as many sources to demonstrate the kind of learning that they had accomplished.

It would also be appropriate to question the level of scholarship needed for the senior sermon as compared to the work done for a student pulpit. At the very core of a thoughtful, impactful sermon is the preacher's need to know their audience. A sermon that doesn't demonstrate profound use of scholarship would be a failure in the hallowed halls of HUC, while the same sermon might be entirely appropriate for a congregation. The academic community of the College is not only capable of, but expects the use of textual analysis that would be inaccessible to a congregation of lay-people.[51] This does, in many ways, cloud the process of evaluating sermons. The Chapel is, after all, the largest classroom on campus, and therefore is, at least to some extend, mailable to the learning goals of a particular student. If a preacher is looking to practice a particular style or

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[51] It would be a beautiful thing if this wasn't the case. A congregation with enough high-level education to follow a preacher to any textual destination would be a beautiful thing, but remains an aspiration far more than a reality in many communities.

delivery, they may be willing to take a risk in this space that would be too "dangerous" in the world of congregational life. In one way or another, these sermons are, by very definition, an odd combination of practice for the rabbinate and yet very much unlike anything that a rabbi will ever offer again in the professional world.

To that end, a student rabbi is given a sermon advisor, an educational tool unlike anything that would be present in the pulpit world. These mentors, drawn from the Cincinnati clergy community and the faculty of the college, are both a helpful resource for the writing process as well as an influencer of the end product. A student paired with a rabbi in the field of Midrash, for example, would wind up receiving very different textual recommendations and guidance than would a student who is getting mentorship from a rabbi in the field. These influences result in a very different product, and often lead to sermons that are both quantifiably and stylistically diverse.

In a similar vein, the textual citation data explored at length in Chapter 2 are influenced by the curriculum that student rabbis received as their education along their time at school. These learning obligations and expectations are not uniform across a 20 year period, though, leading to at least some of the textual anomalies found in the data collection. Nachmanides is one of the easiest demonstrations of this phenomenon. The 13th century Spanish commentator is referred to 57 times in the 492 sermons, a respectable number total. This would mean an average of 2.85 total mentions per year, but this does not play out in the actual year-by-year breakdown. In the 2002-2003 school year alone, Nachmanides is referred to 10 times. In the subsequent year, that number drops

to two references. Yet, in 1998-1999, four years before the spike, there was

another flare-up of Ramban references, for a total of 7. Few sources were as

"streaky" as he, leaving an obvious conundrum. Was this the result of a professor

who taught the commentaries class while the usual teacher was on sabbatical?

Were there adjustments made to the curriculum from year to year? Were these

classes particular followers of the thinking of this particular rabbinic thinker?[52] A

curricular review on this topic would be an entire paper unto itself, but it is worth

acknowledging that the choices made by a student rabbi demonstrate the ways

that they react to the learning that is done in the classroom, and the pieces of

information for which they are taking the most dramatic ownership in their own

right.

Now, not all textual references are created equal. When evaluating the

Torah portions cited over the period of research, it would make sense that all

parshiot receive a similar number of references; these are, after all, time-bound

readings, and should correspond with the week they were delivered. But that does

not bare out, as certain Torah portions receive far more attention than others.

Achrei Mot, a Torah portion that often falls in the second semester when student

rabbis are likely to preach, was only cited 7 times, well under the yearly expected

number of 18. Vayera, meanwhile, takes the gold medal with the most references

with 30. We might conclude that, based on the citations, this is such a popular

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[52] It could be considered that these would be classes who particularly enjoyed the study of Mikraot G'dolot Torah commentaries, but that does not bare out. The data for other great commentators like Rashi, Rambam, and Ibn Ezra do not spike in parallel ways, therefore removing the possibility that these classes simply were more likely to cite commentaries in the most general sense.

Torah portion because of the richness of the textual narrative; a preacher can discuss Abraham's welcoming of strangers, Sarah's pregnancy, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Akedah. Meanwhile, Terumah, which is in the top 5 most popularly referenced *parshiot*, gets 24 citations overwhelmingly making the same quotation over and over again: "Make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them."[53] It becomes clear that, while some texts receive a diverse treatment for the inherent depth, still others receive attention for the single lines or phrases that resonate through history.

By very nature of the platform of the senior sermon, many of the students gave what can only be described as autobiographical sermons. So many of the topics involved a preacher processing their own experience of the world. Dozens of sermons spoke about the experience of marriage, the birth of children, the loss of loved ones. While none of these ideas have inherent textual value, it would be impossible to divorce the profound impact that a lifecycle event has on a human being. Their reference in a sermon give a strong indication of the relationship built through preaching; these student rabbis were giving of themselves and their own experience in order to make a point of value. By nature of the inherent makeup of the congregation receiving the sermon, the student rabbis understood that they were speaking to a group of fellow students and professors, all of whom were well-versed in a great many of the lifecycle events they were going through. By choosing to put their words through the filter of their own experience, they

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[53] Exodus 25:8

brought to life the act of delivery, making the lesson they hoped to impart even more resonant.

No experience was more commonly cited nor impactfully articulated than the impending ordination of the rabbinic speaker. Time and time again, a student rabbi attempted to put into context what they were preparing for in their final weeks before becoming a rabbi. What is the expectation of a rabbi in terms of their relationship to continued education? What is a rabbi's duty to their congregation in terms of humility and authority? Time and time again, student rabbis attempted to use this moment as a chance to engage with the most profound question facing them in the coming months: what does it mean to them to become a rabbi and ascend to the level of authority that has been their aspiration for so long?

Once again, this is a reminder of the importance of relationship as an element of the homiletic task. It would be both detrimental and, in many ways, impossible for a preacher to think about their role without putting it into a larger context. In much the same way that a pregnant woman preaching so often makes reference to the life they are about to bring into the world, there is something deeply human about using the pulpit as a way to process one's own emotions about their impending lifecycle moment. At the same time, while it would be intellectually dishonest for the preachers themselves to ignore the people who are writing the sermon, it is also problematic to exclusively speak about issues of the self, while losing the congregation to which a person is speaking. This is one of the reasons that the particular pulpit is so valuable as a learning space. This opportunity for a student rabbi to practice the level of transparency appropriate

for the congregational rabbinate includes the space to occasionally violate a boundary in a safe and controlled space. Rarely would it be appropriate for a rabbi to speak quite so extensively about their own process of learning their role, while it is entirely natural, if not encouraged, for a student to do so in the Scheuer Chapel.

In determining the quality of textual analysis, one of the resounding issues continues to be the places where texts are discussed but not cited explicitly. This, it might be reasonable to assume, is the fear of what happens in the rabbinate at large when a student leaves the safe place of the seminary. Rather than speaking directly to the texts that help to back up an argument, instead a rabbi will discuss a topic of importance to them and put forward their thoughts, likely supported by Jewish tradition, but without the burden of proof through exposition. One of the examples of this came in 2013, when student Rabbi Meredith Kahan spoke about the importance of adding legitimacy to the Reform experience. In her thesis statement, she said "Reform Judaism stakes its roots in tradition while at the same time progressing and revitalizing. Reform Judaism is challenging and it is rewarding...We cannot lead Reform Jewish communities unless we each can define our own Reform Jewish identity."[54] This sentiment is one that resonates deeply, not only with what Kahan was attempting to bring to light, but the writings of her peers during that same time period. The frustration, meanwhile, is that this sermon contained only two sources, Rabbi Eric Yoffie, the immediate past president of the Union for Reform Judaism, and Edmund Fleg, a 20th

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[54] Kahan, 2013, 5th Year Sermon

century Jewish thinker. While each of these voices is intriguing and engaging, it actually strikes to the very challenge of what Kahan was attempting to combat: in order to take seriously the work of engaging with Jewish tradition, Jewish text must be at the center of the conversation.

Whether true or simply anecdotal, there was a time in the history of the Reform rabbinate when the rabbi was the keeper of knowledge, an intermediary between the congregation and the greater wisdom of the world as a whole. Congregants would come to the synagogue to hear what the rabbi had to say about what was in this week's New York Times, a paper that an average American outside of the city were unlikely to have access to on their own. In the 21st century, though, this is no longer the reality. More so than at any other phase of human history, the average American Jew has more access to information and analysis than ever before, decentralizing the rabbinic claim at knowledge and information in their broadest senses. The result, then, is that the modern Reform rabbi has to be ever-more attentive to the mandate from which they speak. The mandate of the Reform rabbi is to speak to the modern experience of being a Jew living in American society. Without the basis of Jewish tradition, text, or interpretation, Jews would be well within their rights to ask why they wouldn't be better served listening to a political pundit process their news rather than a clergy person.

What results is a challenge to the kind of sermon delivered by Kahan and many of her colleagues throughout the past 20 years. It isn't that every sermon must be about Jewish values and Jewish ideas exclusively. As a matter of fact, this 2013 sermon helps to establish the very impetus for getting involved in

conversations surrounding Judaism in the first place. But without the foundational backing of Jewish tradition, it becomes difficult for a student rabbi to claim any kind of credibility, simply because they were given the opportunity to speak into a microphone. Any sermon that speaks about Jewish texts without making use of Jewish texts is, to a certain degree, failing to live out the inherent values of the sermon as an act of processing information or providing education.

Meanwhile, there are also sermons that speak to one another, or even against one another, throughout the 20 year period of research. Some sermons, separated by many years, actually speak common truths with one another. In 2013, student rabbi Ari Lorge spoke about the parallels in gender and masculinity through the lens of *Toldot*. He stated "It is time to redefine masculinity to allow for both the Jacob and the Esau parts of us; to allow for a real and complex sense of ourselves to be expressed in public."[55] Using the traditional interpretation of Esau as a "man's man" and Jacob as a "mama's boy," Lorge confronts the notion of what it means to be a strong or weak male presence through this particular Torah narrative. What Lorge may or may not have known is that a very similar point had been made in the same space almost 15 years prior, when student rabbi David Burstein, speaking in 2000, offered an interpretation of *Parshat Yitro* exploring the role of gender on mentoring relationships. Burstein said "A man's character is measured by his gentleness and his compassion; a man's strength is felt in his touch and in his kiss; a man's integrity is gauged by the depth and the honesty of his feelings."[56] These are two male rabbinical students speaking about

[55] Lorge, 2013, 5th Year Sermon
[56] Burstein, 2000, 5th Year Sermon

their experience of masculinity 13 years apart from one another, and yet they come to almost identical resolutions. In fact, they each come to their conclusions with a deeply text-based interpretation, but while consulting completely different Torah portions along the way. This exemplifies the way that the close to 300 different preachers who fall into the research period are each attempting to come to a topic of conversation that is relevant, timely, and grounded in Jewish tradition, and yet one that, at least to a certain degree, is timeless.

Resonance is a beautiful harmony echoing throughout the history of rabbinical student homiletics. That isn't to say, though, that dissonance is inherently flawed, problematic, or wrong. In the case of 2011 4th year students Stephanie Clark and Matt Cohen, it is rather the parallels and divergences that make for the most beautiful symphony. Clark uses this sermon as an opportunity to speak about the value of humility. They offer, "Serving a community is an honor and a privilege, a duty that must keep us each humble. Remembering to lead with humility will make us better and stronger leaders."[57] For them, the notion of rabbinic leadership is one in need of the frame of humility, grounding a rabbi in order that they be able to serve with grace and without ego. Meanwhile, their classmate, has a different conversation. Cohen offers the following: "Heaven and earth can touch when we have meaningful interactions in our relationships with significant others, with friends, with co-workers, and classmates."[58] At face value, this is a lovely and altogether unrelated conversation. But the sentiment is quite different from that of Clark. Cohen is articulating something incredibly

[57] Clark, 2011, 4th Year Sermon
[58] Cohen, 2011, 4th Year Sermon

powerful; a person, let alone a rabbi, has the power to bring heaven and earth together through the way they engage in relationship. Cohen is describing a beautiful kind of audacity, one that is not contradictory to the humility offered by Clark, but rather is what happens when that graceful leadership is put to good use. Clark and Cohen do not offer opposite interpretations, but they do offer divergent ones. They each speak to the profundity of their chosen profession, and they each offer a different lens through which to view their task as human connectors. In fact, it is in the different conclusions they draw from each of their readings of Jewish tradition that we arrive at the depth of the homiletic task. In much the same way that Jews have been reading the five books of the Torah over and over again, each time arriving at different conclusions, so too can two classmates experience the same Judaism and the same occupation and come away with deeply honest, accurate, and different reflections of their calling.

At the very epicenter of the task of delivering a sermon is the impact of what is happening in the world at the time of the preaching. There were, in the span of research, any number of external factors that led to the inspiration for a particular sermon: from personal experiences to news headlines. Most significantly of these events during the time period under study was the attack of September 11th, 2001.

Unlike many of history's other major political events, there was no lead-up to the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001. Yair Robinson, who delivered his senior sermon on September 8th, 2001, had no ability to predict what was about to happen to the landscape of American life just a weekend away. Intriguingly enough, Robinson speaks about the importance of forgiveness, with

no consciousness for how important this topic would be in the world a few moments later. The very next sermon, after the High Holiday recess, was offered by Phyllis Sommer, who ties in a conversation about God to the process of struggling with faith amidst great tragedy and struggle. Sommer, it might appear, takes a sermon that very much would have stood alone without the reference to 9/11, and updates it, giving it the context to speak to the reality in which she and her colleagues found themselves. She writes "Like Moses, we too have had a trying few weeks. Since September 11th, our world seems turned a bit upside down…reading these words [referring to the *parshat hashavuah*] gives us the chance to lift our own veil of spiritual blindness, the darkness that prevents many of us from finding God wherever we look."[59] From this moment on, there is a noted shift in the way student rabbis engage with the geopolitics in the world around them. One student rabbi speaks about the way that communities come together in times of struggle.[60] Another makes reference to the Koran, in order to prove the commonalities between Muslim and Jewish American, in order to speak a message of acceptance in a world that has turned deeply Islamophobic.[61] The ripple effects of this single moment in history reverberate through the rest of that year of school, and indeed throughout the rest of the decade. Sermons become more and more political in the subsequent years, speaking to the policies of the Bush Administration and Iraq War in ways that we don't find during the late '90s. While quantifiably it is hard to claim that the student rabbis of the

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[59] Sommer, 2001, 4th Year Sermon
[60] Shulman, 2001, 4th Year Sermon
[61] Goldberg, 2001, 4th Year Sermon

2000s were any more or less politically engaged than their generational predecessors, the impact of this historical moment is undeniable. While the American people struggled to come to an understanding of what it meant to live in a post-9/11 world, so too were American Reform Jewish clergy attempting to figure out the role of politics and conflict in their own words.[62]

As is the case with almost any other moment in time, the generation after change demands a counter-reaction. At the turn of the 2010s, there is a return amongst many of the rabbinic students to conversations about Judaism and Jewish values theologically, rather than politically. These were students who wanted to return to the roots of what it meant to be Jewish, to think critically about the experience of Jewish life in a very different way. Far more popular in the first years of the new decade were sermons about the value of Hebrew in a reform congregational setting, or the concept of love in a general sense. While one decade of students demanded that their Judaism respond to the world in which they lived, another was imploring it to give them the foundations from which they could live independent of the stimuli of the outside world, a kind of respite from the demands of the world around them.[63]

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[62] There is obvious resonance worth noting as it relates to the current political climate at the time of the writing of this thesis. The political climate today in America today is tumultuous in such a way that it has demanded the attention of student rabbis to a similar degree. While the early 2010s would see a return to Jewish values, rather than political contextualization, the end of that decade has seen the pendulum swing in the opposite direction, back to the political. An exploration of the way that politics have impacted the homiletic task in the late 2010s is certainly worth exploring in further research.

[63] Of course, all of this is, at least to some degree, an over characterization. There were, no doubt, many sermons that refused to engage with politics in the early 2000s, and many students who used Judaism to speak to the political realities of the 2010s. That being said, it would be impossible to tell the story of the homiletic development of the reform rabbinate without naming the incredible impact that September 11th had.

The two decades of research this study attempts to explore has any number of historical moments of note, from 9/11 to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, to the much smaller, more incremental changes that come with day to day existence, like the passing of new laws and the development of new technologies. In each case, it is the task of a sermon to speak to the moment in time in which the piece is delivered, and also to canonize the historical experience for the future. There is, after all, a reason that all of these sermons are available for reading in the library; readers want to know what Isaac Mayer Wise had to say about slavery and what Abraham Joshua Heschel said about civil rights. So, too, will future generations have the opportunity to look back on the moments that define their experience of history, and see the ways that student rabbis have processed their moments in time.

In many ways, this chapter has been the moment for the intersection between the use of text in a sermon, and the point where sermons become a text in and of themselves. While Yitzhak Rabin is only mentioned in six citations, all in the wake of his death, it is intriguing to note the way that his assassination was felt in the telling of the story of the sermons delivered in the mid-90s. Thus, just as much as the task is to assess the frequency with which student rabbis make references to particular texts, so too is it important to hold them accountable for the argument they hoped to craft by function of their citations. When thought of

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Anecdotally, one can feel the approach of September 11th while reading backwards in time. The intensity of the communal pain and struggle was impossible to ignore, and left me, as a reader, feeling the impact of what it must have been like to write a sermon for my community at the time. In this particular case, while the significance may be overgeneralized, it would be impossible for it to be overstated.

in this way, the process of studying sermons is the act of studying people. Student rabbis explore the great thinkers of Jewish history, and arrive at conclusions of their own, claims they want to make about their own additions to the interpretation of the tradition. Meanwhile, while student rabbis apply these lenses to their own lives, to the process of becoming rabbis in their own right, to their impending role as parents, to the political reality of their world, these preachers open themselves up to be understood, to be heard, to be quoted.

Not all sermons age well, just as not all texts do. Bill Cosby is referred to a handful of times, as is Woody Allen, neither of whom would get the same affectionate quotations today. Some sermons, meanwhile, well ahead of their time, make references to the prevalence of technology and digital communications in the 90s that we, at the end of the 2010s, feel in palpable terms. In each case, it would be impossible to read and reflect upon sermons without acknowledging the inherent inclination of the reader; what would have been brilliance and beauty to one listener may have come across as contrived and boring to another. By tracing such influences as curricular impact, personal experiences, and historical moments, the impact of a sermon goes from an act of quantitative information gathering to an artform, a painter using words to craft an idea for anyone willing to listen.

Conclusion

I love sermons. The homiletic craft is the time in a service where the community truly gets to know the prayer leader, and gets to build a relationship with their spiritual guide. Over the course of my thesis research, I had the opportunity to get to know over 250 student rabbis, getting the chance to meet the two decades of people who had paved the way to my own journey through rabbinical school.

In fact, many of these people did shape my rabbinical journey, long before I had the chance to read their sermons. Each student who makes their way through Hebrew Union College is a byproduct of a multitude of influences, a great many rabbinic voices that help to guide the person to their future as a colleague. One of the issues that came up during my research period was the challenge of filiopietism, the overly reverent treatment of a historical figure in analysis. To me, the words I was reading came from rabbis, the people who I had looked up to for so much of my life, the people who had helped me imagine that I, too, might one day become a rabbi. I had, prior to my research, already heard of many of these individuals, already had encountered them in their professional work. I had to remind myself often that I was not reading the words of the great rabbi I had met before; instead, I was reading the words of a student, still working to find their voice and grappling with the topics they deem worthy of the attention of the HUC-JIR Cincinnati community. As Rabbi Johnathan Hecht once said "The difference between a good sermon and a great sermon is about 150 sermons." Reading the sermons from the Scheuer Chapel, these were some of

the first works many of these writers had to offer, and a great many have given well over 150 sermons since. Yet, they rang with the kind of authority of the rabbis who they would eventually become.

At the Union for Reform Judaism's Biennial in Chicago in 2019, I had the opportunity to meet many of the rabbis I had read during my research. I got to speak to over 25 of the voices that I heard in my reading, got to discuss with them not only what they had written but also how their words had reverberated through their careers. What came as a surprise was how often the now-rabbis couldn't remember what they had said only a decade or so prior. These words that had been so central to their experience of rabbinical school had now faded to just another one of the many sermons delivered over the course of a career. Something that, at one point, had warranted the singular focus of the college community in the eyes of the preacher had faded, had receded amongst the many passions and interests of the rabbi. These are my future colleagues, the individuals who will be my partners in the work of leading the Jewish people. I felt like I already knew them; I had been with them in their sermon, had read what stirred their passion. Getting to put a face with a name, getting to actually meet these people I had come to admire was another step of the experience of radical relationship that serves as the foundation of the homiletic craft.

It is a popular aphorism that a rabbi has one sermon throughout their career; that all sermons they will ever give ring with the same singular truth that is central to that preacher's calling in life. Hearing the reaction from the rabbis from the field, reminding them of the words that, at one point, had been so important to their rabbinic experience, both rejects and affirms this notion. On

the one hand, student rabbis all-too-easily leave their senior sermons behind, forgetting the words, and losing this particular tree in the forest of their preaching careers. How, after all, could a student rabbi have any notion of what cities they would live in, what issues would come into vogue, what new societal changes would demand attention? But, upon reminding the rabbis of what their words had meant to me, as a researcher, many of them responded in the same way: "that sounds like me." The truth of what they were hoping to express still holds a hint of who they have been along their rabbinic journey. These are no longer the only words they have ever offered, but they still fit within the context of what the rabbis have found meaningful in their careers. It isn't, it would seem, that a rabbi has only one thing of value to say. Rather, a rabbi uses one voice throughout their career. Topics of interest, areas of passion, calls to action might come and go, change and shift, but throughout every iteration of a rabbi's career, they are constantly crafting, honing, and shaping the voice with which they speak a truth that resonates with who they are and what they hope to do with their rabbinate.

During a period of 3 months, I read 492 sermons. But these sermons were delivered one or two per week for 20 years. The very nature of the sermon is that a preacher speaks to the community once a week, calling to action some thing for the community to consider more deeply, or some action the preacher hopes to inspire over time. Early on in my research, I experienced a kind of call-to-action whiplash. In one hour-long period, I would read about the need to increase Hebrew literacy in the Reform community, then turn immediately to a discussion about the role of values of forgiveness and kindness, before launching into a

discourse on the kind of higher education to which our congregants should aspire. As a recipient of the homiletic messages, I felt compelled to find value in each of them, felt pulled to honor each of these demands for action. But, by very nature of the volume of sermons I was examining, it was impossible for me to do everything. I would practice my conversational Hebrew for a few minutes, read a book of modern Mussar, explore sacred texts, each time attempting to acknowledge the call that I had received. It was, though, impossible at the speed at which I was reading to do everything, impossible to go wherever the preacher hoped I would. Underlying my frantic academic motion was a basic understanding of what it means to be called to action: a good sermon inspires doing. A good student rabbi had the power to use words to cause other people to reexamine their behavior and to reconsider how their actions participated in a larger conversation of value for the Jewish people.

And yet, there was, I must admit, something troubling about the calls to action that I read over and over again. My biggest difficulty with the sermons I explored was that the calls to action almost exclusively settled around the same three verbs: think, consider, and feel. The actions rarely centered around doing much of anything, instead calling attention to an issue that demanded further consideration.

What, then, is the point of this sermon as a rabbinical student, if the calls to action don't inspire any actual change? There is a claim to be made that this community isn't a congregation, at all. Unlike at a synagogue, these student rabbis have limited ability to create an accompanying initiative or project to make the change they are encouraging. There is, of course, some flexibility in

leveraging the college community to undertake some action of significance, but they are hemmed in by the reality of the sheer volume of students who each would set the agenda differently. The college can't afford to follow the whim of every student rabbi who preaches in the chapel. They would wind up following 30 different initiatives every year and accomplishing nearly nothing. When factoring in the student turnover every four years, it would be even more tumultuous to try to accomplish everything. As a result, these students settle for think, consider, and feel. The thinking seems to be that if a preacher can't change the world with words, then hopefully they can inspire the congregation to take the work home with them to consider solutions for themselves.

This is where we return to the root of why I find sermons to be compelling. Sermons are an act of radical relationship. By standing in front of a group of people and setting the tone for a conversation, student rabbis are empowered to share their vision for how they should view the world around them. They get to set the agenda for what the community is going to think, that which it is going to consider, and how it should feel. Preachers are given the gift of a space to set the tone for how the community is going to go forth to make an impact on the world.

In the 18th century, Moshe Chaim Luzzato wrote a book of Mussar, titled *Mesilat Yesharim*, the Path of the Just. In his introduction, he says "I have written this work not to teach people what they do not know, but rather to remind them of what they already know and clearly understand." He goes on to articulate "to the degree that these rules are well-known and their truth self-evident, they are routinely overlooked, or people forget about them altogether." What Luzzato offers in his book is straightforward. We needn't a dictionary to

understand the meaning of "humility," of "vigilance," of "purity." What Luzzato says is that the task of engaging with these ideas is, in and of themselves, the act of bringing them to life. One can only be humble, vigilant, and pure when they are thinking about them, can only be one's best self when they are engaging with the task of repairing themself in order to repair the world.

Herein lies the reason that sermons are so valuable: sermons are the spaces during our traditional liturgy where a preacher is able to use the tools at their disposal to convey meaning to the modern world. A prayer service is, in some ways, an abstraction; it asks for a prayer participant to use the words of the tradition as inspiration for their own spiritual direction and fulfillment. A sermon, though, is far more overt. A rabbi uses that same tradition and crafts it into something of direct value. They, in a way, do the work for the community, processing the information into a format that will allow for immediate connection and understanding.

And once the sermon is put out into the world, it becomes a text in and of itself. This Thesis undertook to explore the ways in which homilists used primary source material; which Torah portions were most commonly referenced, which commentators brought the most frequent insights, which secular culture icons were most accessible to a student rabbi. In each case, the sermon became a kind of tapestry for the sources brought in by the preacher, weaved together to create a coherent argument of its own. Now, as I conducted my research, this tapestry was woven even one step deeper: the sermons themselves became primary sources in their own right. I was able to make reference to rabbis who, at the time had been mere students, but have now become leaders and thinkers of the Reform Jewish

future. These students become my guides, just as Rashi and Rambam had guided them. It is, admittedly, quite a bold claim to equate rabbinic students with Rashi and Rambam. But it is, in some ways, in keeping with the literary tradition of Judaism. The Torah has always been at the core of Jewish scholarship and learning. But on the outside, the Midrash and Talmud built additional layers upon which to provide more guidance and insight. Upon that foundation was built the corpus of commentaries that helped a new generation come to terms with the value the original texts could bring. Over and over again, new generations gave another layer to the conversation about how Judaism was to be put to good use in the world around us. Now, with the writing of this thesis, there is another layer to the scholarship, a new generation of "rabbis" putting their words into the spiral of analysis, critique, and context.

As a student rabbi in my own right, it was always my intention to use what I have learned to develop my own skills for homiletics. It was a very intentional choice that I studied student rabbis in an era that as closely matched my own time in school without overlapping. I could have learned a great deal from the sermons given in the 1940s, 50s, or 60s. But I wanted to see the way my own colleagues, the ones who would be my senior rabbis, the ones I would ask for help, would handle issues that are likely to arise in my own experience of the rabbinate. It wasn't good enough for this to be merely an academic venture; there had to be a component that leveraged practical rabbinics into the lives of congregants I haven't yet met, but who will one day ask me to ascend a bimah and impact their view of the world.

Over and over again, this Thesis has brought to light the notion that sermons are born out of relationship. One cannot call someone to action, cannot teach, cannot inspire without first understanding the importance of trust, of willingness to listen, of a belief that the words will bring value to the listener. Relationships are the center of the rabbinate to which I aspire, and getting to build a relationship to each of the preachers included in this study has been an absolute gift. Time and time again, my future colleagues, my predecessors, taught me what it meant to use words to craft meaning, and what it would look like to use words to bring a better world into sharper clarity. Having given two senior sermons of my own, I was even easier able to understand the power of that moment, and to understand the grace it takes to deliver a sermon of value. This thesis is a bit like an echo. Student rabbis for generations have been calling forward the sources that brought them meaning and intention in their own experience of Judaism. I now am able to add their names to the list of scholars and leaders who give Judaism the texture and beauty that makes it so engaging, impactful, and interpersonal.

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Year	4th Year	5th Year	Total
14	8	9	17
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12	9	13	22
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8	14	18	32
7			
6	12	9	21
5	10	6	16
4	8	12	20
3	12	19	31
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97	22	18	40
96	17	15	32
95	15	19	34
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Chayei Sarah				1	1	1	2		1	2	2	2	1	2	1	3	2	2	1	24
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Emor						1	1		1							1				4
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Vayelech							1		1											2
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Chukat															2					2
V'zot HaBrachah																1			1	2
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Shelach L'cha								1												1
Bamidbar												1								1
Naso																1				1
Shemot																		1		1

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Ezekiel								1	1			1					2		3	8
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Esther							1				2				1	1				5
Zohar								2			1		1	1						5
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Jeremiah												1	1	1	1	1				5
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Daniel													1		1	1				3
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Judges							1								1					2
Joel							1											1		2
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Mah Tovu		1																		1
Prayer for Children			1																	1
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Mishlei																	1			1
Amidah																			1	1
Gevurot																			1	1

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Talmud Berachot				1		2	1			2	1	1		1	1	5	2		1	18
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"Mishnah"				1			1	2					1			1		1		7
PIrkei D'Rabbi Eliezer						1		2							3		1			7
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Talmud Yoma		1								1		1	1	1						5
Talmud Yirushalmi			1							1				1		1		1		5
Sefer Ha-aggadah						1						1					2		1	5
Talmud Sotah						1		1				1	1				1			5
Talmud Baba Batra		1				1									2					4
Talmud Megilah			1							1	1				1					4
Sifre					1	1								1					1	4
Talmud Eruvin						1	1		1					1						4
Talmud Sukkot								1		1	1						1			4
Baba Kamma									1					1	1	1				4
Mishnah Sanhedrin											2		1						1	4
Avot de-Rebbi Natan										1			1			2				4
Bamidbar Rabbah										1	1	1				1				4
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Tosefta					1			1											1	3
Talmud Menachot					1									2						3
Talmud Taanit						1										1	1			3
Pesikta D'Rav Kahanah						1								1		1				3
Pesikta Rabbati										1						1	1			3
Midrash Zedah la-Derekh											1					1		1		3
Mishnah Kiddushin					1				1											2
Talmud Yevamot					1												1			2
"Kaballah"					1												1			2
Devarim Rabbah									1	1										2
Talmud Nedarim									1				1							2
Tanna Devei Eliyahu									1									1		2
Mishnah Makkot										1		1								2
Talmud Ketubot										1					1					2
Talmud Rosh Hashanah														1				1		2
Talmud Makkot																2				2
Mishnah Ohalot			1																	1
Mishnah Berachot			1																	1
Mishnah Sukkah				1																1
Shalshelet HaKabbalah					1															1
Talmud Niddah									1											1
Talmud Beitzah									1											1
Mishnah Bikkurim										1										1
Otiot Rabbi Akiva										1										1
Talmud Chullin										1										1
Talmud Shevuot											1									1
Mishnah Horayot											1									1
Talmud Ta'anit											1									1
Talmud Semahot												1								1
Wisdom of Ben Sira													1							1

Source	Total	13-14	12-13	11-12	10-11	09-10	07-08	05-06	04-05	03-04	02-03	01-02	00-01	99-00	98-99	97-98	96-97	95-96	94-95	
Talmud Derech Eretz													1							1
Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael														1						1
Midrash Avot De Rabbi Nachman														1						1
Seder Eliahu Rabbah														1						1
Mishnah Shekalim															1					1
Talmud Tanaim															1					1
Talmud Hagigah																1				1
Targum Yirushalmi																1				1
Talmud Peah																1				1
Mishnah Yoma																	1			1
Midrash Samuel																		1		1
Mishnah Midot																		1		1
Ecclesiastes Rabbah																			1	1

Source	13-14	12-13	11-12	10-11	09-10	07-08	05-06	04-05	03-04	02-03	01-02	00-01	99-00	98-99	97-98	96-97	95-96	94-95	Total
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Rashi	1	2	5	1	5	7	6	4	5	7	9	6	12	8	12	11	5	2	108
Maimonides	1	2	4	2	2	2	4	6	2	4	3	4	4	4	7	4	6	1	62
Nachmanides		5	3		2	3	3		2	10	3	3	4	7	4	4	1	3	57
Ibn Ezra	1	3	2		2	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	1	4	3		2	3	35
"Hasidic story"	1		1	2	1	1		1	1	3			1	1	1	2	2	1	19
Sforno			1		1		1	1	1	1	1	1		2	2	4	1		17
Baal Shem Tov	1		1		1	1	1	1				1	2	2	2			1	14
Yehudah HaLevi			1								1			1	1	1	2	2	9
Rashbam			1							2	2				1	1	1		8
Abravanel				1					1	1	1				1	1		1	7
Bahia Ibn Paquda	1								1	1				1		1			5
Yalqut Shimoni									1	1				1		1	1		5
Or HaChayim										1	1	1				1	1		5
Shulchan Arukh			1		1	1					1								4
Sfat Emet				1		1									1				3
Isaac Luria				1													1	1	3
Radak										1					1			1	3
Akedat Yitzhak														1	1	1			3
Gersonides								1										1	2
Jacob ben Asher									1						1				2
Saadia Gaon												1				1			2
Yaakov Culi												1				1			2
Rabbi Zusya															1		1		2
Tobiah ben Eliezer		1																	1
Legend of the Ten Martyrs		1																	1
R. Chayim Palagi			1																1
Meiri						1													1
Moshe Chaim Luzzato								1											1
Aaron HaLevi								1											1
Moshe ben Adrianopolis								1											1
Vilna Gaon									1										1
Onkelos									1										1
R. Elisha ben Abuyah										1									1
Rav Aha											1								1
Leon of Modena											1								1
Rabbi Mordekai Hacohen											1								1
Joseph ibn Caspi													1						1
Maggid of Mezeritch													1						1
Jesus															1				1
R. Chanania ben Teradyon															1				1
Sefer Yafe Toar																1			1
Mordechai Yosef Leiner of Isbica																1			1
Or Penei Moshe																1			1
R. Elazar of Modi'im																	1		1
Malbim																	1		1

Source	13-14	12-13	11-12	10-11	09-10	07-08	05-06	04-05	03-04	02-03	01-02	00-01	99-00	98-99	97-98	96-97	95-96	94-95	Total
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R. Abraham Joshua Heschel	2	3	2	3		6	2	1	2	4		3		2	1		3		34
Gunther Plaut	1			1	3	1	3		1	1		2	2	4	2		2	4	27
Martin Buber	2	1	1	1		1	2	1	1	2	2		1		4	1	1		21
R. Samson Raphael Hirsch		1	2				1		2	3	1		3	2	1		1	3	20
Nehama Leibowitz				1			1		2	3		1	2	3	2		5		20
Reb. Nachman of Bratslav		1	1			1	3							2	1		1		10
Nahum Sarna				1	1		3	1					1	2			1		10
R. Harold Kushner				1	1		1			1			3	2	1				10
R. David Wolpe			1		1			1				2		2	1		1		9
R. Mordecai Kaplan	1	1	1							1	1	1	1	1					8
Elie Wiesel						1				2		1	1	1	1	1	1		8
R. Lawrence Kushner									2	1		1		1		1	2		8
R. Eric Yoffie	1	1			2				1					1					6
Arthur Green		1				1	1							1	1			1	6
R. Eugene Borowitz		1	2					1									2		6
R. Joseph Soloveitchik				1		2							2		1				6
Philo of Alexandria										1			1	2	1		1		6
Yitzhak Rabin																2	4		6
R. Jonathan Sacks		1				1	1	1		1									5
R. Sidney Greenberg							1								1	2	1		5
Umberto Cassuto													1		1	1	1	1	5
Ahad Ha-Am		1										1	1				1		4
Chayim Nachman Bialik		1				1		1							1				4
R. Isaac M. Wise			1												1	1	1		4
R. Brad Artson		1	1				1	1											4
R. Abraham Isaac Kook		1		2											1				4
Theodore Herzl		1				1				1		1							4
Victor Frankel		1					1				1			1					4
Jakob Petuchowski		1										1			1			1	4
R. Joseph Telushkin			1				1							1	1				4
R. Abraham Geiger			1								1					1	1		4
R. Steven Schwarzschild				1							1							2	4
R. Lawrence Hoffman				1					1	1	1								4
Steven Cohen				3											1				4
R. David Hartman						2				1	1								4
Roland Gittelsohn						1	1								2				4
Jacob Rader Marcus										1						1	2		4
Harvey Fields															1	2	1		4
R. Eugene Mihaly		1															1	1	3
Hermann Cohen		1			1											1			3
R. Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev			1									1			1				3
R. Menachem Mendel of Kotsk			1									1			1				3
R. Jack Bloom				1				1	1										3
Kotzker Rebbe				1													2		3
David Aaron				1	1					1									3
Franz Rosenzweig							1				1	1							3
Danny Siegel							1								1			1	3
Emil Fackenheim							2								1				3
R. Stephen Wise							1						1	1					3
Jack Reimer										1			1		1				3
Norman Cohen										1	1	1							3
R. Simcha Bunim														1			1	1	3
R. Sheldon Zimmerman															1	1		1	3
J.L. Hertz															1	1		1	3
R. Mark Washofsky		2																	2
Edmund Fleg		1			1														2
Jeffrey Tigay		1					1												2
Emmanuel Levinas		1									1								2
R. Hanan Brichto			1													1			2
R. Reuven Firestone			1							1									2
R. Emil G. Hirsch			1				1												2
R. Michael Gold			1								1								2

Source	13-14	12-13	11-12	10-11	09-10	07-08	05-06	04-05	03-04	02-03	01-02	00-01	99-00	98-99	97-98	96-97	95-96	94-95	Total
Everett Fox			1				1												2
R. Nancy Flam				1			1												2
R. Sam Joseph					2														2
R. Abraham Twerski					1										1				2
Michael Zeldin					1										1				2
R. Ruth Alpers					1							1							2
Michael Meyer					1												1		2
R. Bernard Felsenthal					1										1				2
Solomon Schechter						1								1					2
Ellen Frankel						1					1								2
Richard Elliot Friedman							1				1								2
Michael Fishbane							1	1											2
Bernie Siegel							1										1		2
R. Richard Levy							1							1					2
R. Steven Leder								1					1						2
Jonathan Kozol									1				1						2
Julian Morgenstern										1		1							2
Simon Wisenthal										1		1							2
Anne Brener											1		1						2
R. Walter Jacob											1				1				2
Alan Dershowitz											1			1					2
Leon Kass									1					1					2
Robert Alper												1	1						2
David Ben Gurion												1			1				2
Albert Schweitzer												1	1						2
Louis Ginzberg												1	1						2
Arthur Waskow														1	1				2
Chaffetz Chayim															1		1		2
R. Richard Address															1	1			2
Marcia Falk															1		1		2
Judith Plashkow	1																		1
Fanny Neuda	1																		1
R. Debbie Prinz	1																		1
Louis Brandeis	1																		1
Arnie Eisen	1																		1
Steven Windmueller	1																		1
R. Bernard Bamberger		1																	1
Yosi Levin		1																	1
R. Alvin Fine		1																	1
R. Naftali Zvi Berlin		1																	1
Moshe Chaim Ephraim			1																1
John Gray			1																1
R. Allison Bergman			1																1
R. Geoff Mitelman			1																1
Dr. Donald Daniel Leslie			1																1
R. Moshe Feinstein			1																1
Louis Grossmann			1																1
R. Michael Strassfeld			1																1
R. David Silverberg			1																1
Rachel Havrelock			1																1
Donna Schaper			1																1
Naftali Rosenberg				1															1
Estelle Frankel				1															1
R. Dayle Friedman				1															1
Anita Diamont				1															1
R. Shmuel Rabinovitch				1															1
Hasia Diner				1															1
R. Joachim Prinz				1															1
R. Robert Marx				1															1
R. Shimon Schwab					1														1
R. Michael Wasserman					1														1
Uri Zvi Greenberg					1														1
R. Norman Lamm					1														1

Source	13-14	12-13	11-12	10-11	09-10	07-08	05-06	04-05	03-04	02-03	01-02	00-01	99-00	98-99	97-98	96-97	95-96	94-95	Total
Isa Aron					1														1
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Menachem Frisch					1														1
Benjamin Disraeli					1														1
William Dever					1														1
R. Howard Berman					1														1
R. Rick Rheins					1														1
Steven Steinbock					1														1
Nathan Guttman						1													1
R. Avrohom Davis						1													1
Sam Harris						1													1
Richard Dawkins						1													1
R. David Ellenson						1													1
Dennis Prager						1													1
R. Jack Luxemburg						1													1
Alvin Reines						1													1
R. Alan Lew						1													1
Aharon-Ya'akov Greenberg						1													1
Liviu Librescu						1													1
Jeffrey Kress						1													1
R. Michael Dolgin						1													1
R. Joel Roth						1													1
Rainer Maria Rilke						1													1
Michael James WIlliams							1												1
Burton Visotzky							1												1
Marcel Proust							1												1
Jan Karski							1												1
Dorothee Solle							1												1
Myriam Klotz							1												1
R. Samuel Holdheim							1												1
R. Arnold Wolf							1												1
Mychal Judge							1												1
R. Sholom Stern							1												1
Baruch Schwartz							1												1
Gabrielle Vahanian							1												1
James Fowler							1												1
Simon Rawidowicz							1												1
Isaac Leeser							1												1
Ron Wolfson							1												1
Yitta Halberstam and Judith Leventhal							1												1
Carol Ochs							1												1
R. Joseph Albo								1											1
R. Steven Greenberg								1											1
Paul Hersey								1											1
Isaiah Tishby								1											1
Aryeh Kaplan								1											1
R. Abraham ben David								1											1
R. Jacob Nazir								1											1
R. Vicki Hollander								1											1
R. Seymour Rossel									1										1
Alexander Seinfeld									1										1
Steven Covey									1										1
R. Benno Jacob									1										1
Yehuda Amichai									1										1
Hillel Fine									1										1
Henri J.M. Nouwen									1										1
Moshe Zylberstein									1										1
Isaac Klein									1										1
Chaim Stern									1										1
Barry Glassner									1										1
Jacob Neusner									1										1
R. Harold Schulman									1										1
Grace Aguilar									1										1

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Joseph of Pivanitnz									1										1
R. Leah Cohen										1									1
Maurice Lamm										1									1
Kahlil Gibran										1									1
R. Beroka of Khuzistan										1									1
R. Mark Sameth										1									1
Robert Fulghum										1									1
David Polish										1									1
Abbah Hillel Silver										1									1
Yeshayahu Leibowitz										1									1
Samuel Greengus										1									1
Pamela Tamarkin Reis										1									1
Henry Kagan										1									1
Deborah Lipstadt										1									1
William Bennett										1									1
R. Wayne Dosick										1									1
R. Jan Katzew											1								1
R. Arnold Turetsky											1								1
R. Harold Schulweis											1								1
Kauffmann Kohler											1								1
Yaakov Yitzhak											1								1
R. Solomon Freehof											1								1
Michael V. Fox											1								1
Jacob Tsvi Meklenburg											1								1
Naheed Mustafa											1								1
Mark Raphael Baker												1							1
Robert Cover												1							1
Allen McConnell												1							1
R. Elliot Dorff												1							1
R. Michael Gotlieb												1							1
R. Sam Schulman												1							1
Lewis Smedes												1							1
R. Ellen Dreyfus												1							1
William Byron													1						1
Susan Schwartz													1						1
Stephen Levine													1						1
John Knox													1						1
Baruch Levine													1						1
Isaac Aboab													1						1
R. Marc Gellman													1						1
David Fontana													1						1
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Joseph Aaron													1						1
Sheldon Blank													1						1
R. Gary Greenebaum													1						1
Willaim Pollack													1						1
R. Hilel Silverman													1						1
Peninnah Schram													1						1
R. Israel Spira													1						1
Shelley Brenner													1						1
Zila Jane Goodman														1					1
Miriam Oren														1					1
Anda Amit														1					1
Cynthia Stern Owens														1					1
James Lynch														1					1
Joseph Epstein														1					1
Victor Kugler														1					1
R. Rebecca Alpert														1					1
Karen Armstrong														1					1
Edmund Bergler														1					1
M. Conrad Hyers														1					1

Source	13-14	12-13	11-12	10-11	09-10	07-08	05-06	04-05	03-04	02-03	01-02	00-01	99-00	98-99	97-98	96-97	95-96	94-95	Total
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Thomas Mann														1					1
Ari Goldman														1					1
Leon Wieseltier														1					1
R. Robert Kahn														1					1
Samuel Pufendorf														1					1
Simon Weil														1					1
R. Hillel Zeitlin														1					1
R. elimelech of Lizensk															1				1
Louis Finkelstein															1				1
Kevin Leman															1				1
Plato															1				1
Ben-Zion Wacholder															1				1
Menachem Haran															1				1
R. Jerome Malino															1				1
R. Joseph Rudavsky															1				1
R. Samuel Karff															1				1
Nathaniel Stamfer															1				1
Joseph Conrad															1				1
Henry Ward Beecher															1				1
Shlomo Carlebach															1				1
Larry Eisenberg															1				1
Gerda Wissman Klein															1				1
Susan Berrin															1				1
Robert Browning															1				1
Richard Rubenstein															1				1
David Einhorn															1				1
R. Mordechai Katz															1				1
R. Shlomo Riskin															1				1
Richard Sennett															1				1
J.J. Goldberg															1				1
R. Pinchas Stolper															1				1
R. Rami Shapiro															1				1
R. Judah Leib Maimon															1				1
Benjamin Netanyahu																1			1
Moshe Sharett																1			1
Jeff Klepper																1			1
David Marcus																1			1
Menachem Mendel Schneerson																1			1
Isaac Deutscher																1			1
R. Hersch Ginsberg																1			1
R. Rafael Grossman																1			1
Alexander Goode																1			1
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R. Jack Stern																1			1
R. Menachem Mendel Kasher																1			1
Gail Sheehy																1			1
R. Zalman Schachter																1			1
Betty Friedan																1			1
Erik Erikson																1			1
Harriet Lerner																1			1
R. Yoshia Pinto																1			1
R. Azariah Figo																1			1
R. Steven Bob																1			1
R. Alfred Gottschalk																1			1
R. Milton Steinberg																	1		1
David Ariel																	1		1
Jon Levenson																	1		1
Louis Newman																	1		1
Yaffa Eliach																	1		1
R. Leo Baeck																	1		1

Source	13-14	12-13	11-12	10-11	09-10	07-08	05-06	04-05	03-04	02-03	01-02	00-01	99-00	98-99	97-98	96-97	95-96	94-95	Total
Willa Silbert Cather																	1		1
Hillel Silverman																	1		1
Baruch Goldstein																	1		1
David Kimchi																	1		1
Solomon Goldman																	1		1
Pinchas Peli																	1		1
Anne Roiphe																	1		1
R. Yisrael Lipshutz																	1		1
Judith Abrams																	1		1
Samuel Adler																	1		1
R. Biale																	1		1
Samuel Sandmel																	1		1
Baruch ben Jehiel of Medzibozh																	1		1
Thomas Moore																	1		1
R. Shlomo Goren																	1		1
Chaim Potok																	1		1
Elias Bickerman																	1		1
R. Alexander Schindler																	1		1
Joseph Caro																	1		1
Alshikh																	1		1
R. Norman Hirsch																	1		1
Abudraham																	1		1
Haim Cohn																		1	1
Sehfa Gold																		1	1
Debbie Friedman																		1	1
Yigal Yadin																		1	1
Morris Margolies																		1	1
R. Laura Geller																		1	1
R. Lisa Hochberg-Miller																		1	1
Isaac Bashevis Singer																		1	1
Joseph Stolz																		1	1
Moses Mendelssohn																		1	1
R. Nosson Scherman																		1	1
Lisa Aiken																		1	1
Lynn Schusterman																			0

Source	Total	13-14	12-13	11-12	10-11	09-10	07-08	05-06	04-05	03-04	02-03	01-02	00-01	99-00	98-99	97-98	96-97	95-96	94-95	
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1885 Pittsburgh Platform					2	1	2	1			1			1			1		1	10
CCAR policies			1		1				1	1			2						1	7
Reform Movement Documents					1	1		1				1				1		1		6
Alcoholics Anonymous									1		1					2			1	5
Webster's Dictionary								1		1						1				3
1937 Columbus Platform								1					1							2
Declaration of Independence										1								1		2
HUC policies			1																	1
Mothers Against Drunk Driving					1															1
San Fransisco Platform					1															1
Women of the Wall					1															1
Jewish Council on Urban Affairs					1															1
Center for Disease Control							1													1
Synagogue 3000							1													1
International Labor Organization							1													1
Encarta World English Dictionary							1													1
Bill of Rights							1													1
Brown-Driver-Briggs Biblical Lexicon								1												1
National Jewish Population Survey									1											1
Department of Homeland Security									1											1
Encyclopedia Britannica									1											1
1999 Pittsburgh Platform										1										1
Religious Action Center										1										1
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College											1									1
Cincinnati Charter											1									1
Our Bodies Ourselves											1									1
Emmancipation Proclemation													1							1
Museum of Southern Jewish Experience														1						1
Center for Eating Disorders														1						1
United Nations Documents														1						1
Journal of Psychology and Judaism														1						1
Habitat for Humanity															1					1
American Jewish Population Survey															1					1
Judaism and Ecology																1				1
Voices of Wisdom																1				1
Jewish Telegraphic Agency																1				1
Declaration of Principles (Israel and PLO)																	1			1
American Psychiatric Association																			1	1

Source	13-14	12-13	11-12	10-11	09-10	07-08	05-06	04-05	03-04	02-03	01-02	00-01	99-00	98-99	97-98	96-97	95-96	94-95	Total
																			#REF!
William Shakespeare			1		1	1		1									1	1	6
Woody Allen			2				1	1				1				1			6
Martin Luther King						1				2				1	1		1		6
Fiddler on the Roof				1	1										2				4
Bill Clinton						1											1	2	4
Shel Silverstein										1		1	2						4
Gandhi		1				1											1		3
Albert Einstein		1			1									1					3
Richard Nixon						1											1	1	3
Rachel Remen						1				1					1				3
Newsweek Magazine								1						1				1	3
Stephen Spielberg										1				1		1			3
New York Times															1		1	1	3
Star Wars		1										1							2
John Lennon				1			1												2
Ronald Reagan				1								1							2
Jack Miles				1										1					2
Field of Dreams (movie)					1									1					2
Keeping the Faith (movie)					1							1							2
George W. Bush						1			1										2
Abraham Lincoln						1								1					2
Time Magazine						1										1			2
Bill Cosby							1							1					2
Willaim Butler Yeats							1		1										2
Cher								1						1					2
Carl Jung									1			1							2
Mary Douglas									1							1			2
CNN											1			1					2
Soren Kirkegaard											1			1					2
Ralph Waldo Emerson											1			1					2
John F. Kennedy													1			1			2
Mother Theresa														2					2
ER (TV show)													1	1					2
Anne Frank														1			1		2
Cecil B. DeMille														1		1			2
David Brubeck		1																	1
Martin Niemoller		1																	1
Sara Bareilles		1																	1
Sheri Lewis		1																	1
PEW Study		1																	1
Leonard Saxe		1																	1
Aristotle	1																		1
Baruch Levine			1																1
Steven Pinker			1																1
Michael Kimmel			1																1
Star Trek			1																1
The Giver (book)			1																1
Giorgio Vasari			1																1
Salomone Rossi			1																1
Invictus (movie)			1																1
Frank Court				1															1
Triangle Shirtwaist Fire				1															1
Jim Crow Laws				1															1
George Eliot				1															1
Jon Stewart				1															1
Stephen Colbert				1															1
George Bernard Shaw					1														1
Science Daily					1														1
Jonathan Safron Foer					1														1
Karin Winegar					1														1
Bill Maher					1														1
Saint Augustine					1														1
George Washington						1													1
Moses Seixas						1													1
Peggy Lee						1													1
Wallace Stevens						1													1

Name						
Jack Kornfield	1					1
Rene Daumal	1					1
Elliot Spitzer	1					1
Ann Landers	1					1
Harry Potter	1					1
Sweet November (movie)	1					1
Frank Wilczek	1					1
Frederic Brenner	1					1
A. M. Rosenthal	1					1
Margeret Mead	1					1
Jose Cabezon	1					1
Jurgen Habermas	1					1
Tal Brody	1					1
Yehiam Soreq	1					1
Barbara Streisand	1					1
Sameul Beckett	1					1
Leo Tolstoy	1					1
Charles Dickens	1					1
Steve Martin	1					1
Marc Chagall	1					1
George Gershwin	1					1
Ruth Bader Ginsberg	1					1
Michael Mukasey	1					1
Larry Cox	1					1
Dick Cheney	1					1
Abraham Maslow		1				1
Dale Larson		1				1
John Meyer		1				1
Gabriel Garcia Marquez		1				1
Ace of Base (band)		1				1
David Potter		1				1
Al Gore		1				1
Virginia Woolf		1				1
Jared Diamond		1				1
Roger Sperry and Michael Gazzaniga		1				1
Thomas Hobbes		1				1
Michael Behe		1				1
Thomas Jefferson		1				1
Jean-Paul Sartre		1				1
George Lakoff		1				1
F. Scott Fitzgerald			1			1
Mel Gibson			1			1
Holly Near			1			1
Herman Melville			1			1
Jane Austin			1			1
Helen Rowland			1			1
Fanny Brice			1			1
Rita Rudner			1			1
Tina Turner			1			1
Ovid			1			1
Socrates			1			1
Rodney Dangerfield			1			1
Laura Kipnes			1			1
William Bridges			1			1
Beverly Hillbillies (tv show)				1		1
Joe Hymas				1		1
Theodore Roosevelt				1		1
Irving Berlin				1		1
E.M. Foster				1		1
Stephen Baxter				1		1
Andrew Cockburn				1		1
Kevin Bales				1		1
Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham				1		1
Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young				1		1
Mary Tyler Moore					1	1
Thomas Aquinas					1	1
Mark Twain					1	1
Kissing Jessica Stein (movie)					1	1

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	Total
Star Spangled Banner	1					1
America the Beautiful	1					1
The Pledge of Allegiance	1					1
Associated Press Report	1					1
James S. Jackson	1					1
William Doyle	1					1
Harvey Milk	1					1
Rodgers and Hammerstein	1					1
Harry Pappas	1					1
Daniel Gordia	1					1
Aung San Suu Kyi	1					1
Edgar Allen Poe	1					1
Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat	1					1
Jamie Leigh Curtis	1					1
Lewis Hine	1					1
Mohammad Khatami		1				1
King Abdullah of Jordan		1				1
Phil McGraw		1				1
Willaim Wordin		1				1
Sigmund Freud		1				1
Michaelangelo		1				1
The Straight Story (movie)		1				1
John Bradshaw		1				1
Arthur Miller		1				1
Antoine de Sainte-Exuperay		1				1
John Donne		1				1
Emmanuel Kant		1				1
Felix Adler		1				1
Alexander Kohut		1				1
Anthony Kennedy		1				1
Hans Christian Anderson		1				1
Albert Camus		1				1
Helen Fielding		1				1
Jorge Luis Borges		1				1
Ed (TV show)		1				1
Les Misrables		1				1
Nelson Algren			1			1
Christopher Reeve			1			1
Bye Bye Birdie			1			1
Potter Stewart			1			1
Sliding Doors (movie)			1			1
William Stieg			1			1
Charlotte van Oyen Witvliet			1			1
Pope John Paul II			1			1
Carolyn McCarthy			1			1
PT Barnum				1		1
Ferris Bueller's Day Off				1		1
Thomas Moore				1		1
Al Pacino				1		1
Mr. Pinkett				1		1
Oliver Stone				1		1
Jean Mayer				1		1
Elton John				1		1
Mitch Albom				1		1
Ryan White				1		1
Mad About You (movie)				1		1
Carl Sagan				1		1
Roger Rosenblatt				1		1
Lisa Aiken					1	1
Ken Burns					1	1
Frank Lloyd Wright					1	1
Peyton Manning					1	1
Ken Griffey Jr.					1	1
Grant Hill					1	1
Aaron Boone					1	1
Anwar Sadat					1	1
Harry S. Truman					1	1
Chris Deburgh					1	1

Name						
Don McLean		1				1
George Thorogood		1				1
Jay and the Americans		1				1
Whitney Houston		1				1
Dionne Warwick		1				1
U2		1				1
Prince of Egypt (movie)		1				1
Michael Jackson		1				1
Aaron Feurstein		1				1
Catherine Steiner-Adair		1				1
John Dos Passos		1				1
Jim VanDerGrift		1				1
Stuart Smalley		1				1
Judith Viorst		1				1
Cincinnati Post		1				1
A Bug's Life (movie)		1				1
Life is Beautiful (movie)		1				1
Ursula LeGuin		1				1
Jerry Lewis			1			1
James Velez			1			1
Nancy Reagan			1			1
Titanic			1			1
Laura Schlessinger			1			1
Schoolhouse Rock			1			1
Willaim Thompson			1			1
Leonard Nimoy			1			1
Delores Krieger			1			1
Myra Welch			1			1
Stephen Hawking			1			1
O.J. Simpson			1			1
Muhammad Ali			1			1
Robert E. Lee			1			1
Challenger			1			1
Judy Garland			1			1
James Baldwin			1			1
Howard Jones			1			1
Free to be you and me (song)			1			1
Jerry Springer				1		1
The Ten Commandments (movie)				1		1
Dr. Suess					1	1
Elvis					1	1
Damn Yankees					1	1
Apollo 13					1	1
The Beatles					1	1
Stuart Brand					1	1
Eric Fromm					1	1
Adam Sandler					1	1
Tonya Harding					1	1
Beethoven					1	1
Grover Cleveland					1	1
Maharasha					1	1
Judith Antonelli					1	1
Cincinnati Enquirer					1	1
LA Times					1	1
Yasser Arafat					1	1
Nietzsche						1	1
Dean Hamer						1	1
Descartes						1	1
Francis Bacon						1	1
Jesse Jackson						1	1
C.S. Lewis						1	1
Emma Lazarus						1	1
Abbott and Costello						1	1
Highway to Heaven (TV show)						1	1
Mike Espy						1	1
Forrest Gump						1	1
Wizard of Oz (movie)						1	1
Sylvia Plath						1	1

Ralph Ellison		1	1
Katherine Powers		1	1
Ted Kennedy		1	1
Pulp Fiction		1	1